PHILIP KYRITSIS

TOTAL OBJECTOR

in time of general conscription

Autobiography

Part 3

ATHENS 2025

PHILIP KYRITSIS

TOTAL OBJECTOR

in time of general conscription

Autobiography

Part 3

ATHENS 2026

Editing: Filippas Kyritsis

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. To view a copy of this license, visit http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/ or mail to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, US

To my children Christiana and Giorgos to learn what I did in my life, how I did it and why I did it, as well as to everyone who found themselves stuck in difficult situations and thought they were to blame for it.

Note:

In order to avoid misunderstandings, I must emphasize that my autobiography was completed in 2017. The prologue was written in 2023, and its English translation was uploaded online in 2025 and 2026 in three parts.

CONTENTS

BACK TO LEFKADA – REVIVAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CONSCIENCIOUS OBJECTORS AND BIRTH OF OUR SON.....18

I'm getting arrested because I couldn't stand the noise from a bar with women under my house! A good police chief will save the situation! 18

I'm being sued because I couldn't stand the noise from a bar with women under my house..... .20

The support concert for the prisoners with a request for the release of Erdal 21

The Revival of the Conscientious Objection Association. 22
A three-day period for conscientious objection to the N.T.U.A. 23
The "lightning mobilization" at the Turkish embassy 24
The Ecological Initiative of Lefkada and the landfill of Lefkada. 25
The Voluntary Work of Lefkada – Easter 1994 27
An old friend who died early: Anna Skitsa 28
The concert of S.A.S. in Panteio for the international day of conscientious objection....29
The stabbing of Stathopoulos by Manologlou and the end of Panteio' haunt. 30
The big event of S.A.S. on Strefi hill in the summer of 1994 – The event of the Athens Voluntary Work in the same place at the same time. 30
At the desks of the French Institute of Athens 32
Translator at "Free Press" who never published my translations - The birth of my son. 33
Karate again with my Japanese teacher's former assistant. 33
The second major event of the S.A.S. on Strefi hill – My conflict with Spyros Psychas....34
Our move to Lefkada and the issuance of the decision of the Counsil of State on my case. 35
MY SECOND STAY ABROAD 37
Self-exiled in Italy: My arrival in the financial and cultural capital of Italy, Milan....37
Volunteer at the reception center for the homeless – The center of Milan: Another world 37
"With a little help from my friend" Masimo rents a house in Milan! – Argyris 39
At least two hours in the queue by mistake, for a residence permit with a mistake in my last name! 41
My family comes and finds me – The unforgettable summer in Milan 42
We are visiting the most beautiful cities of northern Italy at my aunt's expense 44
My daughter starts her school life in a primary school in Milan – I translate “Memories of women terrorists” and studying French 45

In Germany to represent the Associarion of C.O.s in receiving the Peace and Non-Violence Award Friedrich Sigmund Schulze.....46

With Serdar Tekin at Hofgeismar to receive the award 47

The Friedrich Sigmund-Schulze Award Ceremony. 48

The events continue the next day as well – a Greek journalist in Germany informs us that the objections in Greece will be recognized!. 52

Back to Milan – What happened to the prize money 53

My daughter is suffering from grass allergy – We rediscover the Italian comrades who had hosted us in 1984.....54

My daughter's spectacular school year's end celebrations. 55

Summer baths in Milan with a view of the planes rising in the sky. 58

I'm flying to Norway! Another dream of my life comes true. 59

The Haraldsheim hostel in Oslo, where the pan-European meeting of conscientious objectors took place. 61

I was lucky enough to live with the only conscientious objector who came from Latin America! – The Arrogant Slovenes Objections. 61

The representative of conscientious objectors of Serbia Bojan Alexov: 64

An authentic anti-nationalist!. 65

I spoil the idyllic atmosphere by contradicting a progressive general of N.A.T.O. – Defending the Latin American rebels 66

Moments of relaxation and cheerfulness: The trip to the islet in the Oslo bay and the visit to the Norwegian beer hall–The conscientious objector that looked like an SS soldier.....66

An evening in the "tourist" part of the Oslo harbor with the Hungarian objections and the assignment to me of the initiative to create in Greece a branch of the world organization for the prohibition of "anti-personnel mines" mines".....67

Impressive sights in Norway's small capital – A cathedral leveled by Protestant Christians (Evangelicals) – Munch's famous painting “The Scream". 69

The State Library in Brera: An impressive library in the halls of an old monastery...72

I'm moving to the seventh floor of the apartment building on the Street of Stars...72

Trying to absorb as much of Europe's beauty as I can before heading back in the piteous "Psorokostaina".....73

Venice becomes part of my life: My memories of the city that made me feel as close to it as to Lefkada 74

Alone in beautiful but extremely inhospitable Florence I run to see the oldest museum in Europe – With my good friend conscientious objection to beautiful Bergamo 78

Touring the Milan of the Dead: Saint Bernardino and the Memorial Cemetery. 80

At the "Scala of Milan" on the the days of the tribute to Maria Kalas, watching one of the world's greatest dancers rehearse: Mikhail Baryshnikov. 81

Leaving the city that sealed my life and the life of my daughter: The goodbye kiss of the "mobster" 82

Crash landing in the sad Greek reality: Three Greek ships that were supposed to sail and none sailed - The credit card that saved me - The return to Greece and the end of my military obligation.....84

FINAL RETURN TO GREECE – TAE KVON DO AND THE FOUNDING OF THE ANTI-NATIONALIST MOVEMENT. 86

The Greece I lived in during my return : Loneliness and economic suffocation to the extent of having a stroke.....86

My son cracks his skull falling down the railingless stairs. 87

The whole family spends the night by the side of the little one at the university hospital of Ioannina. 87

Return to Lefkada, peak and end of the symptoms that fueled my fear of death.....88

Lazaros Petromelidis refuses to serve the despicable alternative term that they ask him and is sent to prison. 90

Old conscientious objectors refuse to serve unaccceptable alternative term - The Association of C.O.s proves unable to mobilize for Lazaros Petromelidis.....91

I remain alone in justifying the NATO intervention to end the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo. 92

New adventures with my health -The arrival of the new millennium and the futurists' unfulfilled profecies about substantial changes, bad or good, in the new milennium.....93

Reading as an obligation to myself, in order to justify the choices, I had made in the past 94

The Lefkada militants and writers, whom I met personally: People who appreciated my struggles 95

Resuming Martial Arts training – Tae Kwon Do and my term as president of the Lefkada Tae Kwon Do Sports Club. 96

The Tae Kwon Do seminar and the training sessions at a seaside park in Preveza....98

The branch of the Association of Conscientious Objectors in Lefkada. 98

My sad experience of Greek hospitals because of the treatment my father-in-law and my mother had before they died – The great earthquake in Lefkada in 2003.....99

Giorgos Nakratzas, Nasos Theodoridis and the founding of the Anti-Nationalist Movement 101

The Association of Conscientious Objectors is recognized officially as an association, the first elections of the new association and my departure from the Association of C.O.s for which I had done a lot and it had offered me a lot....102

The Anti-Nationalist Movement survives and does not have the fate of the "Committee for the Rights of Foreign Workers and Minorities" and the "Group for prisons" 104

Our trip to Ithaca and the revival of my hypochondria – One good priest.....105

With my son in Metsovo 31 years after I passed by it as a student during the six-day school excursion....107

ALONE IN LEFKADA AND THE AUTONOMOUS INITIATIVE OF LEFKADA....110

The return of Sophia and my children to Exarchia. ....,. 110

I finally find anarchist comrades in Lefkada .... .111

The Autonomous Initiative of Lefkada. .... .111

The event of the Autonomous Initiative of Lefkada against human trafficking.... 112

The second event of the Lefkada Autonomous Initiative - My acquaintance with the Agrinio comrades 114

MY DAUGHTER AT UNIVERSITY AND MY ACTION FOR AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL – THE FIGHT AGAINST RACISM 116

My daughter at university, 15-year-old Alexis Grigoropoulos in the grave murdered by a policeman, like 15-year-old Michalis Kaltezas 23 years ago: The reaction of the movement Volos. 116
The reaction of the movement in Athens on the third day after the assassination..117
The demonstrations and the riots following the assassination of Grigoropoulos continue. 119
My speech on total objection to conscription in the squat of Matsangos in Volos
The concert in the main building of the University of Thessaly,"Tholos". 120
The The Action Team of the Greek branch of Amnesty International in Lefkada: Event against trafficking. 121
The fight for the rights of the gypsies in Lefkada 122
The "dress rehearsal" of Golden Dawn's attempt to dominate the center of the country's capital and the absence of anarchists from the counter-demonstration with which the "dress rehearsal" was addressed.....125
The Golden Dawn's police-unmolested attack on the presentation of the Greek-Macedonian dictionary in the Foreign Press Correspondents Union's hall.....127
Golden Dawn with the protection of the police breaks up a large anti-fascist demonstration and proves that it is here to stay.....128
The anti-racist event of the Amnesty International's Lefkada Action Group at the Labor Center of the city 128
The attempt to organize the anti-fascist forces of western Central Greece and its meager results 129
My efforts to "bring anti-nationalism" to Volos - The anti-specist event in the Matsangou squat 132
The anti-fascist counter-gathering in Larissa and the occupation of the Medical School of the University of Thessaly. 132
ABROAD AGAIN AND MY ANTI-NATIONALIST STRUGGLE. 135
At the age of 54, I visit the most tolerant European capital of the 60s, a magnet for libertarians everywhere: Amsterdam.....135
Amsterdam's Torture Museum. 136
A reliable picture of the lifestyle of the progressive bourgeoisie 137
Rembrandt Square and the shops where Indian hemp is sold. 138
A good bus driver – A 'sterile European capital' 138
It's time to realize a big dream of mine: To visit Paris.....140

In the Louvre museum from the "back" door - The Mona Lisa painting of Da Vinci target of hundreds who want to be photographed with it but despise the other paintings! 141
We accidentally end up in the most famous palace in Europe: The Palace of Versailles 142
The oldest palace in Paris that became its most famous prison and "hosted" the famous anarchist François Ravassol..... 143
Getting a taste of the of the circumstances of the anti-authoritarians in the center of Paris 144
Looking from above the city I dreamed of getting to know during my a whole life life 144
Our stay in Paris coincides with the celebration of the national holiday of the "homeland" of chauvinism: France..... 145
Walking by the river I've been hearing and reading about since I was little. 146

We return with Sophia for the third time to London and end up at the underground railway station, where we had ended up on our first trip 32 years ago!. 147
The ugly sides of London that I did not encounter in Paris 149
Getting to know the sights of London that we hadn't seen, although we had been again there, for the first time 32 years before 2010..... 149
Buckingham Palace - London from above..... 151
In Edinburgh with a delay of 26 years!..... 152
The worship of ancient Greece by the Scots and the facade of the Parthenon!..... 153
Catholic-Protestant War and a royal blood story – A Medical Museum with a long history..... 154
On Scotland's largest lake – Stirling Castle and Scottish Nationalism – The old abandoned cemetery on a hill in the center of the town. 156
A quick look at Brixton, where we squatted 26 years ago 158
Again in Greece: The squat "Antiviosis" and support for the refugees of the forest of Igoumenitsa..... 159
The pan-Hellenic anti-racist demonstration in Igoumenitsa 160
My book dealer comerade is getting seriously ill and I'm afraid I have the same illness!..... 162
Fascists get the upper hand in Athens with the help of the Mass Media and with the protection of the police and the judges. 163

The "movement of the squares" precursor to the dominance of the fascists in the squares and in the streets of Athens.....165
Fascists dominate Athens and organize patrols where they abuse brutall immigrants – A personal experience of the fascist pogrom of the spring of 2011.....166
The attempts for a documentary about the anarchists of the 70s.....167
The documentary about the anarchists of the 70s and the reactions 169
The presentation of the Macedonian-Greek dictionary at the "Nosotros" social center..... 170
Three anti-nationalist events at the "Nosotros" social center.....173
The event about Falmerayer and the origin of the Greeks 175
The event about the Ottoman Empire and the tragic consequences of its collapse for its inhabitants 176
The event on the history of Greece from a Jewish point of view 177
My last trip to my father's hometown, Trikala 179
My daughter ends up in the erstwhile squat Termita in Volos and I employ a lawyer in order to rent out her apartment! 181
My life at the time of the bailouts and the lawlessness of Golden Dawn.....183
NEW BUT INTERESTING ADVENTURES ON THE ROAD TO OLD AGE. 185
A completely unexpected turn in my life that started from a speech about the prisons in the former squat of Patision and Skaramanga 185
Easter with our new friend at home and with my homeless friend in the national garden..... 185
The squat where our new friend lives is evacuated and she is taken to the detention center for immigrants in Petrou Ralli street..... 186
The best birthday of my life! 186
Our new friend is arrested again and tried for carrying a weapon!.....187
A lawyer who fights anti-Semitism at great personal cost displaces our new friend from our house 188
Public shaming of socially weak women in the name of public health's protection189

A strong shock to my relations with my wife for a trivial reason that could have been avoided – My son into university.....190

My efforts to get my new friend to continue her studies 191

The anti-racism festival of July 2012, an unexpected night phone call and two fraudulent air conditioner repairmen.....192

An unexpected meeting some time after an anti-speciesist protest 194

MY JOURNEY TO THRACE AND TURKEY 196

A "celebratory" welcome at Kavala airport by my "teachers".....196

An impressive annual event in a minority village for a Turkish audience. 197

I learn about Pomaks by listening to and talking to Pomaks.....198

Visit to the minority village of Echinos and the tomb of an Ottoman noblewoman ..199

The Greek army still guards the bar that imprisoned the Pomaks in their villages. 200

Reception by friend and comerade Mustafa at the beautiful cafe of the Turkish Youth Union of Komotini - "Pilgrimage" to Ahmet Sadik's grave 201

The aggressive follower of the Golden Dawn in the cafe of Mustafa's uncle - With International Amnesty's representatives in a restaurant of the Turkish religious endowments.....203

In Turkey by Turkish bus together with the member of the Turkish minority, my friend and comerade Mustafa Tsolak.....203

I find that Athens is a big village compared to Istanbul.....204

The old Ottoman palace of Istanbul with the "High Gate": Topkapi.....205

The disappointing, given its reputation, once christian-orthodox church of Hagia Sophia and the impressive "Blue Mosque" - The Royal Tombs and Yerebatan 206

The repeated prayers from the loudspeakers of the mosques and the ban on alcohol in the Muslim world.....207

The grim reality behind the facade: Alcohol consumption and prostitution.....208

The impressive "enclosed garden" palace, Mustafa Kemal's apartments and the realization of my dream of drinking coffee by the Bosphorus.....209

The anniversary of the Turkish victory over the Greeks on August 30, 1922.....211

On the Colden Horn Bridge and the huge "Covered Bazaar" of Istanbul 212

In the pavilion of the officials during the annual wrestling matches in Allentepe!.214
Mustafa Colak is targeted by the far-right newspaper "Stohos" during our trip to Istanbul 216
RETURN TO GREECE AND CONTINUATION OF THE ADVENTURES. 218
Another attempt to push my new friend to continue her studies – An old friend and comrade of ours reappears out of nowhere. 218
For the first and last time I see an opera at the Athens Opera House under incredible psychological pressure 219
The "lost" friend is found again at her home!. 221
The sequel and eventual dramatic end to our old friend's brief presence in my life: Sophia and I ended up completely falling out! 221
An act of hospitality that cost Sophia an emergency trip and me a summons to the police station! 222
From relationship problems to health problems: A kidney colic and my first operation under general anesthesia. 224
Nationalism triumphs, the fascists are elected by hundreds of thousands of Greeks while we anti-nationalists are just scraping by, with the result that we haven't published a magazine since.....226
The nationalists push the parties beyond their limits of tolerance, stabbing an anti-fascist rapper to death, only for their leaders to be jailed for a brief period.....226
The event for the ten years of the Anti-Nationalist Movement 227
Sophia sets up a Social Cooperative Enterprise, my daughter gets her engineering degree and my friend, a homeless anarchist poet, dies on the street.....229
The first female anarchist prisoner after the restoration of democracy and the Syrian refugee who appears as a "deus ex machina" and ensures the sustainability of the Social Cooperative Enterprise.....230
COMRADES AND FRIENDS ARE DYING – THE TRANSLATIONS AND THE FINAL RECOGNITION.....232
A succession of friends and comrades are dying, one after the other, signaling that I am approaching the end of my own life.....232
An illness and a death lead me to rekindle my relationship with an old comrade and she paves the way for my latest translation to be published. 233
The event at the squat Prapopoulou for the publication of the "Small encyclopedia of anarchy": I am finally being honored in the place where I grew up!.....234

The struggle to get an old comrade we recently met released from the psychiatric hospital 236

The struggle to free the comrade reaches the courts 238

The unexpectedly free comrade is featured in an event on psychiatric repression at the Pasamontaña Social Center. 240

At last there's an audience out there that actually wants to hear what I have to say. I've been asked to be a speaker at book launches in Agrinio and Ioannina.....241

A book launch in Ioannina organized by the most well-known representative of the total conscientious objectors' organization "The Barefoot Battalion".....242

In the castle of Ioannina 41 years after visiting it during the six-day school trip of the six-year high school I graduated in 1974. 243

After a full 30 years, my translation of the book «The struggle to be human" is published 244

Back in Korydallos for a book launch, 36 years after my release from it's prison.....245

BACK TO LEFKADA – REVIVAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS AND BIRTH OF OUR SON

I get arrested because I couldn't stand the noise from a bar with women under our apartment! A good police chief will save the situation!

The shop below my house in Lefkada was operated by my brother-in-law as a disco until 1993, with the consequence that, since it started as a disco, I could not stay in the house above. Thus, two years had passed and I had not set foot in Lefkada. Of course, before he opened the disco, I told him not to, because we wouldn't be able to stand the noise. He used to yell at me then. But in the summer of 1993, we were informed that he closed the disco and rented out his shop for a bar, again without asking me or his sister who owned the house above. This forced me to go with Sophia and my three-year-old daughter to Lefkada, to see what I could do. I wanted, at least, to do something with the noise, not knowing what kind of bar was below our house. Of course, I didn't take long to find out what kind of bar it was, hearing low class tavern songs (laika) all night and seeing only men coming in and out, while in the shop I saw only young women coming to work.

I don't remember how we learned that in order for such a shop to operate in an apartment building, or even a two-story one, it should have previously secured permission from those above. We probably found out from the police when we went to complain about the noise. We had never given such permission. Today I consider that we were very lucky that time, because the police chief was good and did not take bribes, which had the effect of supporting us in trying to get rid of the noise. And I say he was good, not only because he enforced the law but because I learned from a classmate of his in the police officers' school, that he was one of the best guys. So this police chief told us that since we didn't give permission, the store would have to close in 15 days. Not wanting to clash directly with my brother-in-law, I asked, through his sister, that he install good insulation. He installed some soundproofing himself, but it turned out to be insufficient. Learning that we were not satisfied with the soundproofing, the woman head bartender of the bar came up to our house one night in her provocative work attire, to check the truth of what we were saying. She also found that the songs could be heard, even if not loudly, but she told us that there was no money for better soundproofing. Meanwhile, the police had asked the shopkeeper, who, before opening this shop, with two other partners had a similar shop outside the city, to close it within 15 days. One day he called me to his shop to beg me to give him some time so that he could at least make the money he had paid to "bring" four women from the land opposite to Lefkada. "Opposite" he meant Aetolia-Acarnania which at that time was full of infamous shops. I replied that I do not set the deadlines but the police. He too must have been

more or less unfit for this profession, for one day I saw him with a blackened eye from a punch. Most likely he was hit by some customer who didn't want to pay an exorbitant bill, because I once heard a customer, leaving around five in the morning, wondering how he wasted 50,000 drachmas on drinks in so few hours. He couldn't understand, it seems, that drinks cost more when accompanied by a woman sitting next to you, whom you are obliged to treat her too, in exchange for allowing you to sexually harass her. I suppose that some such customer who did not have to pay, had beaten the shopkeeper when the latter went to demand the money, alerted by the barmaid. This shopkeeper had neither the size nor the training beating nor the comfort to carry a weapon like a successful pimp. Not even reliable tips to the police, as it turned out.

Anyway, seeing his hopes fade away, this shopkeeper demanded the money he had given my brother-in-law to take over the shop, back. He did not give them but decided to force us to give the permission. To this end, one afternoon, together with the shopkeeper and a partner from his previous shop, he knocked on our door. I opened the door for him but forbade him to enter the house, seeing these guys and his moods. He pushed me and forced his way inside. I called the police to come but they didn't come. So I had to leave, to go and fetch the police from the local police station which was nearby. While I was away, my brother-in-law quarreled with his sister, and because she was not convinced, attacked her with bad temper. But his sister was not alone. A cousin of hers had stayed with her, who was quite stout and determined, and managed to restrain him. He, seeing that he would have to deal not only with his sister but with all the relatives, and not wanting the police to find him in our house, left with the others. So when I arrived with two policemen, he had gone downstairs, into the shop. I tried to get in, to show him to the cops, and he pushed me out. After all this, I realized that only the police could stop him and I suggested that his sister sue him for the assault, which she did. He, in order to retaliate against the suit, made a "false accusation," as it is called, against me, alleging that I had beaten him, with his wife and his tenant as witnesses. So we both found ourselves being interrogated as accused in the police station. The officer who interrogated me, when he asked me if I had been convicted before and I told him about my 9 years sentence, he told me that he was very glad to meet me because he had previously served in Exarchia and had seen how much people valued me, there, and how much they had fought for me. But his joy was not enough to let me go, because, after my brother-in-law's lawsuit, I had to pass a court for flagrant crimes and therefore I had to be detained. My brother-in-law had to go through the same thing, as a result of which we both ended up in the police station’s detention cells. So, with my brother-in-law's false lawsuit, I was once again behind the bars, 12

years after my release from prison. I admit that the place seemed familiar to me and that's why, every now and then, I called out "guard, guard", to ask for something each time. A little later I was taken out of the cell to be seen by a lawyer arranged for me by Sophia's relatives, and before many hours passed, we were led to the prosecutor. He turned the immediate trial for flagrant crime into a regular trial and we were released. My brother-in-law did not give up and made us "security measures", as they are called, to force us to give permission, so that the shop does not close. He even had a communist as a lawyer, who much later, after a scandal involving the right-wing president of the island's bar association, became president of the bar association and the previous president did not go to prison. I had a right-wing lawyer too. Finally, my brother-in-law lost the security measures and the shop was closed. After that, my brother-in-law, when he saw me on the street at some point, told me that he will beat me so much that I will stay in the hospital for two months. And he continued to be defiant, even when he saw me on the balcony of the house, until one day I shouted at him, from the balcony, so that the whole of Lefkada could hear me and I threatened him that I would open my mouth, so that the whole Lefkada know his past. So he was persuaded to stop swearing at me and leave. And since then he never challenged me again.

I'm being sued because I couldn't stand the noise from a bar with women under my house

The courts were held after months. My brother-in-law refused to appear in court. Sophia, without telling me anything, reconciled with her brother's lawyer and, in court, withdrew the lawsuit. At my own trial my brother-in-law's wife and his tenant, who were witnesses for the prosecution, denied seeing me hit Sophia's brother, and so I was acquitted. But with all that, I had already spent 150,000 drachmas on lawyers, which was a significant amount for that time. But that didn't bother me as much as Sophia's withdrawal, which happened without her saying anything to me. Coupled with the fact that she had never scolded him about his unacceptable behavior towards me, this made me want to get up and leave Lefkada, where we were then due to summer, and want to break up with her . But there was also the child, our three-year- old daughter, who I could see that, with the way Sophia was raising her, was probably creating problems for her. That's what finally kept me from breaking up. I didn't want my daughter to pay the consequences of my brother-in-law's behavior. I loved the little girl, who was also very cute, and I didn't want her to grow up without a father. This tactic, not wanting to let something "go wrong" for which I gave a lot, even though I saw that, in order for it not to go wrong, I would make my life very difficult, I always followed it. I cannot say whether I thus treated myself as he deserved, and that my life was thus better than if I had not yielded, but I can certainly say that thus I preserved most of what I had invested in.

The support concert for the prisoners with a request for the release of Erdal Karasu – The release of Erdal

Returning to Athens, Sophia focused her struggle on trying to release Erdal Karasou, who had already been in prison for 9 years. In collaboration with some people from the Heiden squat and a couple of others, such as a member of the "Ochra Spirochaiti" group, she organized a concert in support of the prisoners, which included the demand for the release of Erdal Karasou. I was then impressed by the fact that Pola, who many years later I learned that her last name was Rupa, had also helped organizing the concert. Below, speaking of conscientious objectors, I will say when I saw her for the first and last time and that will explain my surprise when I learned that she collaborated with Sophia. Anyway, this concert took place in Eleftherias Square of Korydallos, which was then a large plateau surrounded by flower beds, and had neither tables nor chairs from the surrounding shops, as it had later, nor was it a Metro construction site, as it is today. "Ochra Spirochaiti" also played in it. I didn't go, because I had to take care of the child so Sophia could go. Sophia went but after some time, I think after 11 pm, she left. The next day (there were no cell phones back then) she learned that shortly after she left, a group of people came and attacked to the people who had stayed at the concert, causing the concert to stop. Those present at this incident told Sophia that the thugs who attacked were hooligans from another district and the reason for the attack was football. I didn't like this interpretation. I considered that the reasons for the attack were political and the hooligans sought to break up a concert of support for the struggles of the prisoners.

A short time after the concert, Erdal Karasou was released from prison with the intention of being deported to Turkey, to serve the remainder of his sentence there, following a decision of the competent Piraeus Council of Misdemeanors. At the trial of his application, Katerina Iatropoulou appeared as a lawyer, but the judges knew that the one who was pushing for his release from prison was Sophia. I realized this when on the day of the discussion of the case by the Council, before the discussion began, the judge in charge called our house and asked Sophia to hurry to Piraeus to attend the discussion. He didn't want to start the conversation without Sophia! After the Council's decision, Erdal was transferred from the prison to the Drapetsona police station, where he stayed for weeks, until he found money to pay the policemen who would accompany him to the deportation, which would take place by plane. Since he couldn't find any money, I put the money in, as a member of the "Group for Prisons". It was quite a lot of money, about 100,000 drachmas, which I would not have had if I had not recently sold a plot of land. Unfortunately, although Erdal was released from prison in Turkey, after six months he came illegally to Greece and became involved in illegal activities. It didn't take long for him to go back

Translated from Greek to English - www.onlinedoctranslator.com

to prison, after we had previously seen him and hosted him for three days in our house in Lefkada. After his new imprisonment, Sophia never dealt with him again, while the "Prison Group" had ceased to exist, because two of its members had left, without giving an explanation. At least, as I learned, they had left for professional reasons, i.e. their work did not allow them to be in Athens and deal with our team.

The revival of the Association of Conscientious Objectors

I, in Athens, focused my interest in the effort to revive the Association of Conscientious Objectors, in which Spyros Psychas was the protagonist and Giannis Chrysovergis was also helping with his contacts in the mass media and abroad. Little by little, we managed to gather every Wednesday at the offices of Solomou 27, about a dozen people. As there was a kind of irresponsibility in the finances of the Association and I was eager to put them in some order, I was given the charge of the treasurer. Finances mattered because, first of all, the rent, electricity and telephone had to be paid. Fortunately, we were co-located with the Voluntary Work of Athens and, typically, with the Ecological Initiative, thus sharing the rent and the bills. But we also needed money for our activities, such as posters and leaflets. Therefore, as a treasurer, I could offer a lot. I did this work because I had the courage to do what others did not: Every time we got together, I went with a booklet and asked those who had not given it, the monthly subscription to the Association that we had agreeed to give. Even if they did not have the full amount, I received installments. To those who grumbled, I said that we are fooling ourselves if we think we can clash with the state on such a vital issue as military service, and we can't even pay the office rent. At that time, in Athens, the squats were few and were in the hands of anarchists, such as the squat of Heiden, the squat of Feron and Philis and the squat of Alkamenous. The anarchists did not get along well with the objectors, because almost all the objectors claimed alternative social service to the military service, while the anarchists preferred exemption as lunatics, except for some brave ones, like Maziotis, Nathanail and Karapanos. I don't remember if it was in 1993 or 1994, when Karapanos and a girl, probably in a support rally for Maziotis, who had been caught again as insubordinate and had to go on a 50-day hunger strike to be released, burned the Greek flag in the Propylaea. At that time, the Association issued an announcement for the press condemning the burning of the flag. When I had asked Psychas, about the one who sent the announcement to the press, he had told me that probably Chrysovergis had sent it. Was it possible for the anarchists to have a good opinion of the Association after something like this? I, nevertheless, did not fight for the alternative social service and supported the total objection, like some other comrades who then, from time to time, passed by the Association’s office, like Pavlos Nathanail and George Kosmas.

Nathanail had been caught by the police at some point putting up posters for the first trial of Maziotis by the Athens Military Court and had also been beaten by the cops. Kosmas was exempted as lunatic, but he was interested in the conscientious objection. I was trying to be the bridge between the claimants of the alternative social service and the total objectors. And I had a lot of work to do, because there were some anarchists, like Pola, who wanted the dissolution of the Association, because it claimed an alternative social service. I found this out with my own eyes, when at an event of the Association in a hall of the Polytechnic university (N.T.U.A) at Patision street, which was held so that Andreas Rumble, an Austrian conscientious objector who traveled around the world to spread the message of objection, would speak to us, Paula came with about a dozen people, listened to Rumple's speech, and in the discussion that followed, told us that what the Association should do was dissolve itself. I was annoyed by this proposal and I replied that, instead of looking to destroy what others are building, she should look at the mess of the anarchists, because of them the building of the rector's office of the Polytechnic University (N.T.U.A.) was burned down a few years ago. This, of course, was not accepted by the anarchists, who claimed that this extremely massive and well-built building had been burned by tear gas, with the result that Paula accused me of being an enemy of the anarchists. I had answered her that I had nothing against anarchists in general because I was an anarchist myself. This was the first and last time I saw and spoke with Pola Rupa. That night, we hosted Andreas Rumble at our house. My three-year-old daughter was crying and asking for Rumble to go away. Luckily Rumble had no idea of Greek and we didn't tell him why Christiana was crying. After this incident I believed the Napolitan comrades, Francesco and his wife, who, when they had hosted us in their home in Naples, had told us that their little girl, who at the time was the same age as Kristiana, did not want us. She did the same as Kristiana did with Rumble.

A three-day period for conscientious objection to the N.T.U.A.

It must have been the end of 1993 or the beginning of 1994, when we organized a three-day event for conscientious objection in the building of the School of Fine Arts of the Polytechnic University (N.T.U.A.) in the complex of its buildings at Patision street. It included screenings, a poster exhibition, discussions and a concert on the last day. During the three days, journalist Kostas Tsarouhas appeared with a television crew and asked to do a report on the objectors. He had also paid for plane tickets for Maragakis to come from Lefkada, to interview him. I, at that time, had already personally met Maragakis in Lefkada. Tsarouhas, after Maragakis, addressed Chrysovergis, who had known him for a long time, and Chrysovergis, because he did not ask for any permission

to represent the Association, he spoke as a person and not a representative! I expected that this day Tsarouhas would also address us, the organizers of the three-day event. Chrysovergis had told me that Tsarouhas would do that after finishing with him. I had to leave for a while because I had to pick up my daughter from a dance school. During my absence, Tsarouhas filmed what he wanted from our event and asked a few questions, wherever he wanted. Thus, in the television report, an image of the Association appeared, as Maragakis and Chrysovergis wanted it, with the consequence that all the anarchists, who did not trust the Association, were vindicated. I, in spite of all this, having no other collective to turn to that was systematically active for the refusal of conscription, continued to be active in the Association, where Nathanail, who was a total objector, made an occasional appearance, and to whom I had also dedicated my book "To Treloharto", as I did with Maziotis. Nathanail had aquainted me, in the past, with a Turkish political refugee with the nickname Farouk and last name Tunzai, who gave Turkish lessons in an office in Kanigos square and supervised the compilation of a Greek-Turkish and a Turkish- Greek dictionary. I met this Farouk in the village where Maragakis lives in Lefkada, on Easter 1995, when Maragakis had invited people to spend Easter with him. Although from a Muslim country, he had no problem celebrating the christian Easter, something a Greek would not easily do with a Muslim holiday. Of course, Farouk was an atheist as well as a communist (I had heard that before he came to Greece, he was a leader of the "Dev Sol" organization).

The "lightning mobilization" at the Turkish embassy

Returning to my account of the Association, I would like to mention that as treasurer what had surprised me the most was the generosity of a member who had given 50,000 drachmas, a remarkable sum at that time. This member had demonstrated his interest in practice. History showed that he was more interested than the others, because he suffered the most persecution and managed to become the first president of the Association, when the Association was recognized by the courts as an association, several years later. In fact, his prosecutions were also discussed by the UN. and finally the U.N. justified him. This was Lazaros Petromelidis. There were quite a few good guys in the Association back then. With three of them, Savaidis, Iosifidis and Tsouchlis, on June 6, 1994, I symbolically tied myself to the bars of the Turkish embassy, to protest the imprisonment in Turkey of the Turkish conscientious objector Osman Murat Ulke, a member of the Anti-War Association of Smyrna. We had planned this mobilization as a "lightning mobilization", i.e. we would make sure it was covered by the media, before the police picked us up. And indeed, as soon as we were tied, the alerted journalists appeared, took pictures and

video, interviewed, and then the police came. So, I saw our mobilization on Mega Channel's news. Sophia also appears in the television footage, who at that time was handing out our leaflets to people passing by. Our next mobilization was the concert, which was preceded by a discussion and film screening, on the hill of Strefi, that summer. But before I proceed with it, it is worth writing some things about our activity in Lefkada, where we spent a large part of our time, during the same period (first half of '94).

The Lefkada Ecological Initiative and the Lefkada rubbish dump

In Lefkada we collaborated with Maragakis, who already in 1990 had founded together with others the Ecological Initiative of Lefkada. Of these others, the two, after several years, became mayors of Lefkada. We gathered every week to discuss in an old building, next to the church of Ag. Georgios, which belonged to the Municipality of Lefkada and where courses on various subjects were offered free of charge by N.E.L.E. (Prefectural Committee for Popular Education). The issue that concerned us was the garbage. Already in 1986, the Municipality of Lefkada, without any previous study or permission, had decided to make the old salt pans, on its eastern beach, which had been abandoned tens of years ago, become the city's rubbish dump. A rubbish dump near the historic center of the city was not the best, especially when schools started to be built and operated in the same place, in the area of the old salt pans. In 1994, a kindergarten, a primary school, a middle school and a high school operated near the rubbish dump. I, at least, had caught up with the salt pans before the Municipality made a dump there. They were an unusual but very beautiful landscape. The Ecological Initiative was trying to get the dump out of the city and to a place it away from a residential area, where the proper facilities would be built previously after a scientific study by the relevant agencies. Such studies had already been carried out, these had been paid handsomely by the state, but a rubbish dump was not built, because every time a place was chosen for this, the authorities of the nearest village raised the public and together with the crowd declared to the Mass Media that the rubbish dump would pass over their corpses. Already at that time I predicted that, if the authorities and the influential people of the village closest to the new rubbish dump were not paid in money and in kind, if they did not ensure i.e. the so-called "compensatory benefits", a new rubbish dump would not be built. As it was not built, even though 24 whole years have passed since then (1994) and dozens of scientific studies have been carried out that cost the state many millions of drachmas. I, knowing that the only ones who could decide on the compensatory benefits were the municipal council of Lefkada, after many discussions with the most active ones from the Ecological Initiative, I managed to propose to them that we decide on a text, where I brought the municipal council in

front of its responsibilities and I blamed the shopkeepers of Lefkada, who controlled the municipal council but did not want to "put their hand in their pocket". They did not want the Municipality to spend some money for compensatory benefits, from the amount it was wasting to attract tourism to the city. The most "stormy" discussion about the text I proposed took place at the house of the editor of the then only Lefkadian newspaper, "Lefkaditikos Logos". This was Anna Skitsa, who published the newspaper alone, only with the help of her three daughters aged 18, 15 and 12. Maragakis and a professor, Aliki, were arguing against my text, because for them my text was too aggressive for the standards of Lefkada society. Finally, as I had prepared it, it was rejected, but Maragakis took it, made it less sharp and published it in "Lefkaditikos Logos". A little later, when me and Sophia were in Athens, Maragakis organized a demonstration to remove the rubbish dump from near the schools. From what he told me, there were only students at the demonstration, about fifty. There were only two or three of the adult Lefkadians, one of whom was Mayor Margelis, the one who made the salt pans a rubbish dump. I imagine what idea the Mayor would come up with for the people of Lefkada, when he saw that he was more interested than they in getting rid of the rubbish dump next to their children's schools!

With Maragakis, at the time when we worked together in the Ecological Initiative. In front of me is my daughter, left his eldest daughter and behind her Maria, her mother

The Voluntary Work of Lefkada – Easter 1994

With the editor of Lefkadikos Logos and her daughters one day we went up to the village of Maragakis, to discuss the idea of his wife, Maria, to establish in Lefkada a non-profit enterprise, similar to the Volunteer Work of Athens. At that time, Kyriakos Iosifidis, with whom we had previously formed the "Group for prisons", lived in Maragakis' house. Kyriakos helped Maragakis in various agricultural works, which Maragakis was busy with at that time. The discussions, which I mentioned above, bore fruit and together with Kyriakos, Anna, her eldest daughter, Maragakis' wife, Maragakis, me and Sophia, we founded the Voluntary Work of Lefkada, which was also recognized by the courts. However, we stuck to the tax certificates that the tax office requested from all members. Some members, like Anna, were in debt and could not get tax certificate. On the other hand, Sophia and I did not stay in Lefkada all the time and Kyriakos, after a while, returned to Athens. Thus the Voluntary Work of Lefkada, with a statute recognized by the courts, remained forever on paper. However, the effort to build it, as well as the cooperation within the Ecological Initiative, brought us very close to Anna Skitsa, who had a special appreciation for me and Sophia. We were also highly regarded by her fifteen-year-old daughter, a very beautiful and active girl who wrote articles in Lefkaditikos Logos, just like the older daughter. This fifteen-year-old daughter wrote one day, when we were in Athens, a laudatory article about us in the "Lefkaditikos Logos" as well as about our relationship with the long-dead Maratos, based on what she had heard from us, as well as about the letter we had sent to the "Notebooks of Psychiatry".

Easter in 1994 fell on May Day and we did it in Lefkada. It was the only Easter in my life that I roasted lamb myself. And the only Easter when I saw a spit being cut in half during the roasting on the spit, mine! It was also the last Easter celebrated by Sophia's uncle, Kostas, her mother's brother, who represented the type of old Lefkadian, being a native of the city (Branelos, as they are called in Lefkada) and with progressive views (he read "Avgi" every day and always voted for the so-called "renewing" left, from which the so-called "Coalition of the Left and Progress" and later the "Sy.Riz.A." came from). This Easter we spent together with Anna, who had come to the big table, where we were eating with our relatives, and took my daughter and took her to a neighboring amusement park. It might have been my last for me too, because before I started the roasting, I almost fell from the roof of the house, where I was painting the very heavy door of the entrance of the building, which I had been helped to carry on the roof. At some point when I went to pick it up, I backed away from its weight and was pushed to the edge of the roof, where there are no railings. I caught myself, so as not to fall, at the last moment.

An old friend who died early: Anna Skitsa

My relationship with Anna Skitsa became closer from then on, in the sense that she called me every day and came to our house with her three daughters. And when we returned to Athens in the middle of May, after a few days she came and found us and stayed at our house until she finished some work she had in Athens. We accommodated her in my office, where we set up a folding sofa. That period was the only time in my life when I had a separate room for my office. I used the intimacy I had with Anna, and while in Lefkada I proposed to her questions for interviews she conducted with Konstantopoulos (then president of the "Coalition of the Left") and with Zois Koutsaftis, (representative of the communist party of Greece during the Italian and German occupation of Lefkada and a historian of the national resistance in Lefkada), and while in Athens, I proposed to her questions for the interview she conducted with the founder of the Association of Conscientious Objectors Spyros Psychas. I also remember that she and I went to a "dinner" that the Association had offered to the representatives of the European Office for Conscientious Objectors after the end of their annual conference, which that year had taken place in Athens. The strengthening of my relations with Anna Skitsa was not combined, unfortunately, with the strengthening of her relations with Sophia. On the contrary, my many contacts with Anna made Sophia resent and annoyed by our relationship. She made sure to show this to Anna in every way and she put me in a very difficult position. I tried to reconcile things, explaining to Sophia that my relationship with Anna had nothing romantic and that it would serve us to spread our ideas through her newspaper. But I didn't achieve anything and my failure was so devastating that Sophia, a few days after Anna's return to Lefkada, took our five-year-old daughter Kristiana and disappeared in an unknown direction. She disappeared for a whole week or so and I could not find her anywhere, until one fine day she came back with the child. Much later I learned that she had been hosted at the home of another good friend of mine, much younger than me, Mina, to whom I assumed she exposed the "drama" that my friendship with my older Anna Skitsa represented for her. I don't think Mina saw things as "tragic". Although some time, shortly before that time, I must have disappointed Mina when on my birthday I failed to receive her at home, even though she had brought me a present, by going to deliver some money I had raised to the Association of Conscientious Objectors, which had gathered in an emergency meeting at the same time as the appointment with Mina. And yet Mina did not stop dealing with me and in the future we went together to archaeological sites in Athens and Aegina, where I showed her the then abandoned prison, which had been turned into a "wild animal care center".

Unfortunately, my friendly relationship with Anna Skitsa was not as durable as my friendly relationship with Mina. Anna, after Sophia's disappearance, learning that this disappearance was due to her relationship with me, even stopped the contact by phone we had. I didn't do anything to keep Anna's friendship, because I didn't want to break up with Sophia, at a time, precisely, when we were waiting for our son to be born.

The concert of the Association of Conscientious Objectors in Panteio for the international day of conscientious objectors

As for the Association of Conscientious Objectors, that spring or the next, it decided to celebrate the international day of conscientious objection which is the 15the of May, organizing a concert in Panteio, where the then famous Greek performer of Cretan music, Ross Daly, would play. Daly would play for the Association for free and the Association would charge a ticket for the concert. Thus we would collect some money to pay the rent for the offices of the Association and to cover other such expenses. In order to secure permission from Panteio, we contacted an anti-authoritarian hangout set up by some students of the school, which was housed in a school office. From my contact with these anti-authoritarians I found that my struggle had not yet faded from the memory of the students at the school and that the anarchists, at least, held me in high esteem. It was natural, therefore, that they secured for us the necessary permission for the concert.

During this concert I felt very nicely, not only because I was returning to the school, where I had studied, as a recognized anarchist, but also because the money that was collected from the tickets for the concert, the fellow objectors brought it to me being the treasurer of the Association, an office that made me feel proud. I confess, however, that raising the money from the concert was of less importance to me at that stage than meeting one of the most beautiful girls I have ever met in my life. This was Chloe Tahtatzi, a friend of conscientious objector Dimitris Sotiropoulos, with whom she later married and had three children. I spent a large part of the evening of the concert with her, and the interest of such a beauty in what I said, made me feel her company as a reward for my efforts until then, which had secured me such a good name in the Panteio and the position of the treasurer to the Association. When she married Sotiropoulos, I was in Italy, where I received the invitation to their wedding. And not only was I unable to go to their wedding, but I also failed to give them a gift, since they had sent me an invitation. I kept postponing it because of lack of money, and as the years went by, I was ashamed to give them the gift so late. And yet they had been very kind to me by inviting me in their house and offering me a dinner, some months after their marriage and before they had their first child.

The stabbing of Stathopoulos by Manologlou and the end of the hangout at Panteio

Unfortunately, Panteio's anti-authoritarian hangout didn't last much longer. It was closed less than a year after that. It was closed when anti-authoritarians who had started a march from Kypseli square, to go to the Golden Dawn offices, to protest the stabbing of the squatter Stathopoulos of the squat in Alkamenous street by the far-rightist Manologlou, clashed with molotov cocktails with the police who had lined up in Patision and then they went to Panteio and throughout the night they clashed with the police on Sygrou Avenue. After these riots the hangout was forced to close. I was on this march and thus had the opportunity to see how easily the anti-authoritarian protesters are manipulated. Not only did they start riots for no reason, not only did they never go to the Golden Dawn offices, but instead of continuing to clash with the police where they started the riots, they got on the subway and went to Panteio! The most serious victim of this demonstration was the protester Melpo Koroneou, who when attacked by the police after the police had been thrown a molotov, fell down and was kicked in the jaw by an off- duty police officer, as a result of which she spent a week in the hospital. The cop, named Athanasopoulos, was later sentenced to 15 months in prison for his act, but suspended, as is almost always the case with cops.

The big event of the Association of C.O.'s on Strefi hill in the summer of 1994 – The event of the Athens Voluntary Work in the same place few weeks later

In the summer of 1994, the Association of Conscientious Objectors organized a very successful event on Strefi Hill. The event included a discussion, a film screening and a concert. The debate was about conscientious objection, and from it I remember the strong defense of the alternative civil service by Giannis Chrysovergis, who was not afraid to admit that he was a social democrat and that he did not support revolutionary changes. Chrysovergis showed there that he had confidence in himself and what he wanted to say did not depend on the mood of the audience. The film that was shown next was my choice: It was the anti-militarist film "Oi kekarmenoi" (The shaven heads) by Dimitris Makris, who, after my request as a representative of the Ecological Initiative (I didn't risk telling him that I was representing the Association of C.O's) , instructed the Hellenic Film Center to give it to me for free in order to project it publicly. We took it on five or six large reels of motion picture film, which was projected, with a motion picture camera brought to us, by a cinema technician, in the small theater of Strefi. It goes without saying that we paid the

technician for that day's screening from the proceeds of the event. The proceeds of the event came from the drinks we sold during the concert. The concert was a great success, because, apart from the well-known bands, such as Panx Romana, who played for us for free, the weather also brought us people! That night in June or July, it was so hot in Athens, where air conditioners were not yet widespread, that everyone came out of his house and looked for places to cool off. Such an ideal place was the forest of Strefi hill.

Because of the heat, those who came to the concert, around 1500 to 2000 people, consumed much more refreshing drinks, mainly beers, than they would have consumed if it had not been so hot. The beers, which we had in big blue barrels filled with ice cubes, ran out so quickly that the new ones we poured into the ice barrels didn't have time to cool before they were sold. We who sold the beers, were obliged to plunge our hands deep into the cold water, to find a somewhat cold beer to give away. Of course, all the beers and all the drinks were sold, until four o'clock in the morning when we "broke it up". From the money we collected, we covered not only the costs of the event but also had a surplus, with which Psychas produced the first "Guide to Conscientious Objection" in Greek history.

In terms of attendance, we even had total objectors, like Nikos Maziotis, who, although they had no contact with us, had come and spread their banner and distributed their leaflets. I think this was the most successful event in the history of the anti-conscription struggles in Greece. Since then, I don't think I've ever been to an event where all the total objectors mobilized alongside the supporters of the alternative civil service, like those who made up the majority in the Association.

In the same summer, the Voluntary Work of Athens, led by Spyros Psychas, also held an event on Strefi Hill. We, the "Group for prisons", as part of the Voluntary Work, participated with our own table and board, where we had posted newspaper clippings with articles about prisons. In order to finance our team, knowing that at the Association's event in Strefi, people were asking for something to eat in addition to drinks, I made hundreds of sandwiches. To make them tastier I had put Russian salad in many of them. We had almost all of these with Russian salad not sold and as a result, so that I wouldn't throw them away, I would eat them myself in the next few days. At least we covered our expenses and we didn’t lose money because of our initiative.

At the desks of the French Institute of Athens

That autumn, before the birth of our son, I decided to improve to some extent my French, which I had been working on since I was thirteen years old, due to the fact that we were taught it from the first grade of the six-form high school. I had studied French for a year and a half at Panteio, but since then I had given up. Although several years had passed since I had been taught French at Panteio, I had not given up and, when I managed to find money, I enrolled in intensive French courses at the French Institute of Athens. For about nine months I took lessons about five hours a day five times a week. Although I was the oldest in the class (only one student was older than me), I did not feel any complex towards the other students and especially towards the female students who were much more than the male students. Except maybe in front of two students I had next to me, at the last desk, who were talking to each other and laughing. One of them was the most beautiful girl in the class, she was 19 years younger than me and she made me feel very uncomfortable. I wasn't talking to her because I had been led to believe that such a thing would be inappropriate, due to the age difference...

In the French lessons, however, I made a new friend, Festim. An Albanian painter who was kind of engaged with a girl from Mesogeia of Attica and lived in her house, where he made various small statues for tourists. He used to come to classes with this girl, a very nice girl. Festim was distinguished by the questions he asked during the course and by the attention he demanded towards his person. He was probably the least diligent student of all of us and that's why he needed this attention from our teacher Teresa Alatsi. This teacher was a very nice person. I say this because she was always smiling and really tried to make us learn French. The way she taught them was the best of any other teacher of French I had met at school and at the university till then. Perhaps this was because she had several hours a day and the students were all adults and really interested in learning the language. A natural consequence was that she took her work seriously and gave her best. Something that a teacher in public schools could not do, since she knew that most of the students were not interested in her lesson but did it compulsively. Also, Teresa did not treat her students as a whole but was interested in the personality of each one. So, learning of my interest in anarchy, he recorded and gave me a cassette of anarchist songs and some other revolutionary ones, such as "The Deserter" by Boris Vian. In my entire life, I never got another gift from any teacher of mine. The last thing I would like to mention about this period is that it ended with exams, the results of which I never managed to get (I only found out and thus knew that I had done well), because the employees of the French Institute of Athens do not keep the papers of the exams. I only got a certificate that I had attended classes in '94-'95.

Translator at "Eleftheros Typos" who never published my translations - The birth of my son

Towards the end of autumn, I got a job from Giorgos Garbis of the "Eleftheros Typos" (Free Press). I don't remember if it was translation or just typing, I only mention it because, just as I finished it, one night after one o'clock, it was time for Sophia, who was pregnant, to give birth and we took a taxi to the maternity ward, where after less than an hour, and without a prolonged period of labor pains, my son was born. This man, from the moment he was born until today, has always been very convenient for us. Another thing I want to say about him is that when he was an infant and later a toddler, he was incredibly handsome. In his face I saw the verse from a poem by Nazim Hikmet set to music by Thanos Mikroutsikos, which Mikroutsikos included in his album "Political Songs" of 1974 under the title "The most beautiful sea": "The most beautiful children have not grown up yet." That is, until my son had grown up , the most beautiful child had not grown up! It took 20 years from the time I heard this verse in 1974 to see it come true with my own eyes.

Karate again with my former Japanese teacher's assistant

From the following year I remember that I resumed the Karate lessons that I had stopped two years earlier, after the adventures I had in Lefkada. I wouldn't have started them again, if I didn't happen to meet on the street the assistant of my Karate teacher I had a few years ago, Savvas Mastrapas. Savvas told me that he had opened his own school in Polygono and because he invited me, I started going. To go I needed to take a bus which was usually full and I went standing up. Since I was already 38 years old and saw the years go by quickly while living in such a miserable environment as the crowded bus, one day, as I was going up to the Polygono, standing on the bus, I was seized with a kind of dread as to whether I expected anything good from the future. I consoled myself by telling myself that in a few years I would be a black belt in Karate and that was something worth growing up for. I never got a black belt in Karate after all. I got a black belt in Tae Kwon Do ten years later. Unfortunately, I wasn't that regular in my Karate lessons, because apart from the fact that at that time Sophia and I had to take care of two small children, one of whom was still a baby, I also started reading the thirteenth volume "History of Greece" by Giannis Kordatos, which I had bought in installments, in 1976, from a Maoist fellow student of mine at Panteio. Thus, many times I missed the lesson, preferring not to interrupt the reading of the history of Kordatos. Another thing I remember from these lessons is that one day I found Giannis Chrysovergis training at Savvas' school, who had already achieved the yellow belt. I, at that time, had

reached the second blue, but this did not help me when, at some point, I found myself "dueling" with him. I got a kick to the knee that took time to heal.

The second major event of the Association of C.O's on Strefi hill – My conflict with Spyros Psychas

In the summer of 1995, the Association of Conscientious Objectors held another event on Strefi hill, which was also successful. Several days before the event, Sissy Vovou from the "Movement for the Defense of Political and Social Rights" approached us and suggested that we co-organize the event, as we would screen documentaries from the war in Bosnia, a war with which the Movement and especially Sissy Vovou had dealt with for a long time. The documentary was shot by Grigoriadis, a very good fellow, who came to the screening, but I haven't seen him since. We responded to Vovou's proposal by appointing two of its members from the Association to go to the offices of the Movement and discuss the proposal. The appointed members were me and Tsouchlis. Indeed, we went to their offices and found out that the Movement wanted to keep for itself all the money we would make from the event, in order to finance the Bosnians. We disagreed on this, because we need the money to pay the rents and other obligations of the Association, and we counter proposed to share the money. But the members of the Movement were adamant, as we were adamant, until the leader of the Movement, Nikos Yiannopoulos, appeared and stopped the discussion, telling the members of the Movement that, after the new facts, the members had to reconvene alone, to decide what to do. Finally, we were informed after some days that they did not agree to share the money with us, so the Association proceeded to the event alone.

Unfortunately, there were disagreements about this event not only with other collectives but also between us. Specifically, two posters were released for the event: One expressed almost all of us and the other Psychas who put it up himself. Ours had as its central slogan "Deny the army in any way you can" and it did not exclude the exemptions for reasons of mental health as well, as I explained to comrade Nondas Skyftoulis, when he saw us sticking the poster in Exarcheia Square and asked me about it. Also, Psychas' disagreement was also expressed by his delay in appearing in the discussion that preceded the screening of the documentary. In order that the people who had gathered in Strefi's theater not to wait in vain I, Tsouchlis and Nasos Theodoridis opened the conversation. Psychas, unfortunately, did not limit himself to taking out his own poster and being late to the discussion. After the end of the event, around four o'clock in the morning, he quarreled with me, because I did not accept, as treasurer, to give him without the approval of the Association 10,000 Drachmas to pay the taxi for a group that played in the concert, which concluded the event. This amount was excessive, considering that the taxi

from the Western suburbs of Athens, where the group had come from, did not cost more than a thousand. Nevertheless, Psychas did not give up and in the end, telling his girlfriend Sissy that the next day they would not be going on vacation, as they had planned, he tore ten banknotes of a thousand drachmas each in front of us into many pieces, so that we could not collect the pieces from the ground! After that, at the extraordinary meeting we held at the offices of the Association at five o'clock in the morning, in order not to deprive the Association of Psychas, who was its "heart", I proposed that we give 10,000 to Psychas from the money of the event. My proposal was accepted and Psychas took from us the 10,000 dirhams he needed for his vacation, after he had torn his own in front of us. Now, I never found out how the band that had asked for the ten thousand returned to its neighborhood. Besides, I wasn't interested, because from the beginning I had considered the ten thousand that, according to Psychas, they had asked as being an excessive amount. By the way, at noon of the same day, of all the members of the Association, who had to go up to Strefis hill to collect the garbage left behind by the event, I was the only one who went up. Fortunately, my friend and former fellow inmate Cornelios Louloudis had also come to the event the day before and had agreed with me to go together, the next day, to pick up the trash. As it happened.

Our move to Lefkada and the issuance of the decision of the Council of the State on my case

In the fall of 1995, the owner of the apartment we were renting in Ippokratous decided, as the contract was ending, to raise our rent if we wanted to renew it. We, since we were not able even to pay the rent without increase, due to the fact that the second child we had added new unaffordable expenses to the family budget, we decided to move to Lefkada. There we would save the rent, at least. Sophia did not like this solution, being somehow bored of Lefkada, because she had been going there since she was a little girl, but we had no other solution. So, on the anniversary of the Polytechnic university (N.T.U.A.) uprising, I loaded our things into a truck and left for Lefkada. Sophia had preceded me, going the day before to Lefkada with the two children and Mina who accompanied her, at my request, on the trip. From this move I won't forget the rude behavior of the apartment owner, who demanded that we pay even for the hours we stayed at his house, beyond the time covered by the contract. I didn't have any money on me and finally his absurd demand was not met. And yet at first, I had liked this owner, because he was very kind. Unfortunately, his kindness turned out to be only a facade.

But it was not my fate to stay in Lefkada. At the beginning of 1996, my request to cancel the invitation to enlist in the army was discussed in the Council of the State, after seven years of postponements and after two rapporteurs of the Council who

had been charged with my case in the past had withdrawn from the case. One after the other they had left on educational leave. The first, I remember, had suggested the rejection of my application, but he preferred to leave, when I caught him and explained to him that I had the law on my side. At first he had "kicked" against my arguments, telling me that he was not free to handle the case as he pleased, because his path was not a straight one, as mine was. In the end, however, he did not want to be humiliated and gave up my case. But, after seven years of postponements, a rapporteur was found who had no problem humiliating himself by recommending the rejection of my application. He based his proposal on the fact that I had been released from prison by a presidential pardon, which also exempted me from the adverse consequences of the conviction. For this rapporteur an adverse consequence was not to join the army, due to a prison sentence. According to him, the pardon was equivalent to a statute of limitations or amnesty and erased the sentence, something procedurally completely non-existent. On the other hand, a soldier who wrote the Greek constitution is "obliged" to go, the rapporteur presented it as a right, which I had been deprived of and which grace restored to me. Pure crooked justice, that is. But justice is of little value to those who can and do enforce their decisions by force, such as judges. And although the arguments presented by my lawyer, during the discussion of the application in the audience, were all valid and thorough, the case "Filippas Kyritsis v. Ministry of National Defense" was decided in favor of the Ministry of National Defense. Alas, if I could defeat the entire "National Defense", armed only with justice and morality... After all, my lawyer had warned me not to trust the justice of the Council of the Territory and, if I could leave the country, as I had told him, to do so. And, to tell the truth, my lawyer Dimitris Oikonomou, was in a worse position than me when the trial took place: He had contracted cancer at the age of 46 and died a few years later. The last time I saw him was when, some time after the court, I went to his office to inform me of the court's decision. This lawyer, who always had a smile on his face, had in the past suggested that after Panteio I finish Law, in order to take me into his office, because he believed that, due to the stubbornness that distinguished me, I would make a good lawyer. However, to do such a thing in 1985, I would have had to enroll in the first year of law school and not the last, as Pantheon graduates could do in the past. I didn't feel like it either I am torturing myself for another four years to become a lawyer and "eat every day on the map" the judges. Imagine if I had spent the entire creative period of my life in the courts, like this lawyer. I would consider myself a waste of my life.

MY SECOND STAY ABROAD

Self-exiled in Italy: My arrival in the economic and cultural capital of Italy, Milan

After the rejection of my application for exemption I decided to leave Greece for Italy, so that the police could not catch me at any time as insubordinate and put me in prison for a second time unjustly, just like the first. I was able to do this because I was lucky enough to have an increase in my income from rents at the time and my mother assured me that she would help me. And I wouldn't go into the unknown "with hope as a boat", as they say. I had arranged for the Association to contact the Italian objectors and a representative of the Italian Association of Conscientious Objectors, had volunteered to help me find a home in Milan, where the national headquarters of this Association was also. So, in February 1996, almost ten years since I had returned to Greece from Italy, I again left by plane for Italy, to avoid arrest.

In Milan, at the Porta Genova Metro station, Massimo Aliprandini came and found me, who together with Giuseppe Maraci and Vittorio Minervino, kept the offices of the Association in Milan. These offices, a basement in Via Mario Picci 1, were close to Porta Genova, and therefore the appointment between Massimo and I had been made there. Massimo picked me up from the station in his car and drove me to the outskirts of the city, where there was a building that functioned as a reception center (hostel) for homeless people. Italian conscientious objectors did their alternative civil service in this reception center and Massimo had arranged for me to stay as an objector, even though I was not Italian. So, I found myself staying in the spaces reserved for the objectors and was even lucky enough to end up in a room by myself. This room had a bunk bed and I got the bottom one. We were in the middle of winter, there was snow outside and I had a radiator in the room which ensured a very good heating.

Volunteer at the reception center for the homeless – The center of Milan: Another world

In this hostel I met volunteers from non-governmental organizations for the first time. Because the hostel accommodated homeless people, staff were needed, if not to clean the homeless people's rooms, since they were obliged to clean them themselves, but at least for the kitchen and dining room. Conscientious Objectors and volunteers from N.G.O.s were employed in the kitchen and dining room (serving, collecting and washing dishes). I was also employed there, while I stayed in the hostel, until I found a home in Milan. I can confirm that my relations with the Italian

objectors were excellent, and that was because I was quite hardworking, something that was highly appreciated. I was mainly involved in washing the dishes in a large dishwasher, after we cleaned them of the leftovers. When, in fact, one day I decided and cleaned the refrigerator that had not been cleaned for a long time, the objectors understood that they had to do with a reliable comrade, who did not take advantage of the age difference he had with them to avoid work (by then I was 40 years old, while none of them exceeded 28). I also had good relations with the homeless. None of them matched the image of the disintegrated, like personalities, homeless people present in the center of Athens. If, that is, I didn't know they were homeless, I'd just think of them as guests of the hostel which was a good place for someone to choose to stay temporarily, without paying. Not only were the rooms comfortable and clean, but also the food was good and sufficient. The only problem was that no one could stay in the hostel during the day, that is from seven in the morning to seven in the evening. We were all obliged to stay outside, all this time, and this was not an easy thing during the winter. Fortunately, I had an appetite for walking and for visits to the sights of the city, as I also had the offices of the Association, to escape the afternoon hours. At the Association, I actually took charge of the foreign correspondence, since my English was better than the English of the three Italians who kept the offices, or at least that's what they claimed.

I will never forget the morning of the first day that found me at the reception center. It wasn't too cold and I walked to the nearest metro station. Because Milan is flat and not all ups and downs like Athens, and it also has many beautiful buildings, it is a pleasure to get to know it on foot. Of course, the most beautiful buildings are in the center of the city and not in the periphery, but even in the periphery you will not find the ugliness that characterizes the buildings of Athens, if we exclude the few old buildings that are left. Anyway, I went to the most beautiful building in Milan by Metro. This building is the cathedral of Milan, known as the Duomo. There is a Metro station with the same name that goes directly to the large square in front of the church. When I left the station and got up in the square I was really impressed, not only because this square has the Duomo on one side but also because on the other sides it is surrounded by beautiful buildings. It is a different world compared to the world of Athens, where I had the misfortune to spend most of the years of my life. Upon seeing all this impressive sight, I happily ran to a telephone booth and called my mother's house, where Sophia was, to announce my achievement of getting to know this beautiful world up close. Then I entered this huge temple where, when you are inside, you feel very small. The truth is that its interior was relatively dark and cold. But it wasn't as cold in there as it was outside. That's why and other times, during that winter, I sought to warm up a little inside it. Fortunately, in Milan all the churches they are open until 12 noon and the Duomo stays open all day. And they don't look at you strangely when you enter a church, because they know it's a work of art and people come from all over the world to admire it. After all, in churches

smaller than the Duomo you usually don't find anyone to act as a guard. It's not like in Greece where you have to be very lucky to find an empty church. There is always someone watching you suspiciously.

My family in front of the Duomo church in Milan, which impressed me when I first saw it exiting in the square in front of it from the Metro station

"With a little help from my friend" Masimo rents a house in Milan! – Argyris

While I stayed at the reception center, every day I went to the basement, where the offices of the Italian Association of Conscientious Objectors were located, and made Massimo answer the various ads I found in a newspaper that had been recommended to me by Massimo. After much searching I found a two bedroom apartment through a real estate agency. In order to make a good impression on the owner, Massimo opened a foreigner's account for me at the bank he had an account

with, so I was provided with a checkbook. Also, Massimo made sure that I made a regular contract with the owner, like the ones the Italians did, and signed it as a guarantor. It was for four years and would have been automatically renewed if it hadn't been canceled by me. Of course, the monthly rent was very high by Greek standards. I had to pay 950,000 Italian pounds, i.e. 160,000 drachmas a month, while in Athens, in Ippocratous, until 1995 I was paying around 90,000 for a four-room apartment. And as if that wasn't enough, I also had to pay 255,000 drachmas to the realtor and three rents as a deposit, in addition to the month's rent. Let alone the fact that the apartment was in a mess and I had to waste more money to fix it. Just for the kitchen, which was so narrow that it didn't even fit a refrigerator, I had to pay upholsterers around 42,000 drachmas. And one can imagine that previously this apartment was rented as office of the doctor of the neighborhood. And it wasn't just the money I had to spend to fix it. I had to do a lot, like painting, myself, because otherwise I would have to waste even more money. Nevertheless, after weeks of work, I succeeded and made it habitable and with the help of Argyris Panagopoulos, I was able to furnish it. Argyris had heard about us when ten years ago we lived in Perugia, and as a conscientious objector himself too he offered to help me when Massimo asked him to. First we took some furniture from the grandparents' house of an Italian female friend of his, which was in a village on the shores of an Italian-Swiss lake, in Assos, and then from a church warehouse, where philanthropists went and left the furniture they didn't need. We did all the furniture transfers in Argyris's car, to which he had added a grill. That is, without Argyris, it would be very difficult for me to furnish the house in Milan. He even found me a children's bed for my son George, who was coming from Greece and was then two years old.

Although I spent a lot of money on this house and worked hard enough to make it livable, I never lost my excitement that I had finally secured my own house abroad and that too in such a fine and important European city as Milan , which is the economic and cultural capital of Italy. Only the fact that, leaving this house, I found myself in the beautiful, compared to Athens, environment of Milan, was enough to compensate me for both the money and my efforts. Even the people in Milan seemed to me better than the Greeks. I never saw any fights in the street and everyone I had to deal with was very kind to me. The Milanese are strangers to bullying and thuggery, and anything resembling to them is condemned by them. Without a doubt I felt safe on the streets of Milan, something I never felt in Athens.

Translated from Greek to English - www.onlinedoctranslator.com

At least two hours in the queue by mistake for a residence permit with a mistake in my last name!

I learned from Argyris that in order to stay in Milan for a long time, without having problems with the police, I would have to get a residence permit. To this end, one morning I found myself in line to file my papers at the relevant police office. This queue was a huge queue, where the majority were people coming from countries outside the European Union. It took me hours to get to the front and before I got in I also saw an episode between a tall black man and a short Italian cop guarding the entrance to the building. The black man was indignant, because every time the cops put in others, from those who had arrived in front, and not him. The short cop was asking him to stop yelling because he was in a civilized country. But the black man was beside himself and shouted that he was not afraid of being arrested. Finally, the short cop arrested the tall black man, without the latter putting up any resistance. This episode made a special impression on me, because I knew that if this black man had provoked Greek policemen, the Greek policemen would have fallen on him in large numbers and abused him badly. After this episode a policeman came out of the door and said that those coming from the European Union did not have to wait in line. That's how I found out that I had unjustly waited so many hours. Fortunately though, finally getting in was comforting. Inside there were many ticket windows with queues in front of them and that's why I had to wait a long time there as well. When it was my turn, I filed the papers and got my residence permit right away, not noticing that the cops had written my last name wrong. I believe the mistake was intentional, to cause me trouble in the future. Unfortunately for them, no one from the public services, where I later applied, noticed their mistake and I even got an identity card with the correct last name from the municipality of Milan. In Italy, at that time, ID cards were issued by municipalities and not by the police, as here. The duration of my identity card was five years, while my residence permit was for an indefinite period. I remember that, when I had gone to the identity department of the municipality of Milan, the employee had asked me my profession and I had told her that I was unemployed in Italy but a translator in Greece. He wrote that I was a translator, so that my identity could be easily renewed in the future, as he told me. I was very impressed by her kindness at the time, because for so many years in Greece, public service employees had never shown me such kindness and always had a hostile attitude towards me. In fact, I encountered the same kindness later, after Sophia had come with the children and we all had to get a card with a tax registration number. I remember that the official who gave me the cards wished me and my family a good stay in Italy.

My family comes and finds me – The unforgettable summer in Milan

Indeed, three months after my own arrival in Italy, Sophia came to Italy with my six-year-old daughter and my two-year-old son. Argyris brought them from the airport to my house in his car. Fortunately I had just finished the work that had to be done to make the house livable. I consider it my great achievement that, when my family came to Milan, they found a house ready to live in. If you have a house abroad, all other problems are solved. As long as you have some income for food and the absolute necessities. I also had this income from Greece. Despite my efforts, however, we did not have enough and, being in Milan, I began to borrow from my mother.

The summer of 1996 was an unforgettable summer for me. I went around Milan with my family and we visited its many parks which are ideal places for small children. Fortunately, at that time, there were no inspectors inside the buses, so we got around without tickets. In the Metro, in order to enter, one had to check one's ticket against a machine, so that the machine would unlock some bars that the passenger could then push, turn, and pass through. But the machine didn't read the tickets and we used used ones. The only danger was from the Metro employees who sat in a canopy at the end of the row of machines and could ask to see your ticket. I had seen them do it to others so if we found them outside the canopy we would punch valid tickets into the machine. Fortunately, we only had to do this a few times.

With my daughter and my son in front of the lyrical theater known in Greece as "Skala tou Milanou"

In the summer in Milan, the municipality holds a series of events, where anyone can go without paying. We made sure not to miss them, but even when we didn't go to them, we always spent the evenings outside. In the worst case we went where most of the people went and sat: In the square of the cathedral. And we took our walks where most people take their walks: In the majestic Vittorio-Emanuele II arcade or Via Dante, which connects the cathedral square with the Sforza castle, the medieval fortress where lived the noble family who ruled Milan. This fort is full of museums and they are all free. That's why I didn't miss the opportunity to visit them both alone and with my family. I even visited the library of the castle, where I found and looked at a book of paintings by Ingani, the Milanese painter, whose name had the street where our house was. We also often visited a bookshop on Dante avenue where we found loads of beautiful books on sale, without actually buying them. We always felt the lack of money and the fact that we didn't get any books, one night it made my little son cry and shout inside the bookstore "vivio-vivio" to get us to buy a book. He had started crying another time when we didn't buy him a bottle of water to drink, just before we got home. In this case I think I overdid it. However, the child's protests could have been avoided if we had carried a bottle with us and filled it from the public fountains, of which Milan is full. In no city have I seen so many public fountains as I have seen in Milan. But you could also find public toilets in the parks of Milan, where you didn't have to pay. After all, there were also museums in the central parks that were all free. The museums had toilets.

Generally, we did not buy anything edible from outside when we went for walks. We only bought from the supermarket. Even cigarettes, Sophia, who smoked (I had already quit 6 years ago), did not buy from the tobacco shops, which in Italy sell cigarettes and many other things and at the same time also function as bars for a coffee or a quick meal, but from the Arabs she found in some parts of the city. They sold contraband cigarettes, considerably cheaper than the cheapest cigarettes one could buy from a tobacconist. The cheapest cigarettes cost 5000 Italian liras, while the Arabs sold cigarettes for 3500 liras. It goes without saying that these Arabs were in danger from the police, so they took a lot of security measures.

Another thing worth mentioning about the summer in Milan is that every night, behind the Sforza castle, the Milanese danced traditional dances for them, such as the Polka and the Mazurka, on a large dance floor built by the municipality. There were even shops in Milan for the Milanese to go to dance these dances on Saturday afternoon. One such existed in our neighborhood and was visited by people of a certain age, mainly. It was very interesting to see the Milanese dancing these beautiful dances, and we often went and fooled around, especially if some pairs of dancers indulged in impressive figures. In fact, sometimes, some dancers asked Sophia to accompany them to the dance and she did not hesitate to tell them that she did not know these dances.

The biggest problem of the summer was the mosquitoes. Milan used to be surrounded by rice fields and that's why it had a lot of mosquitoes. But now these paddy fields have dried up but the mosquitoes remained. And these mosquitoes were so resilient that even mosquito repellent oils won't stop them from biting you. I remember, characteristically, that one night we had to leave an event held in front of the “Arco della Pace” built by Napoleon I at the edge of the Sempione Park, simply because we couldn't stand the mosquito bites. However, Milan does not have the heat that Athens has in the summer and this is something that made the problem of mosquitoes less annoying.

We are visiting the most beautiful cities of northern Italy at my aunt's expense

That summer, my aunt, Tula, came to Milan for tourism with her daughter. Although the apartment we were staying in had only two rooms, I convinced my aunt to stay with us. With this aunt, because she booked us the train tickets, we visited some other Italian cities, such as Como on Lake Como, Turin, where I had been before and had found my conscientious objector friend Tassos Bata (he had studied medicine there), Venice and Florence. We also went to Switzerland for the first time, to the Italian-speaking city of Lugano, on the shores of the homonymous lake. On these trips I was constantly taking pictures. But even though I had two or three cameras, many pictures did not come out either because I had forgotten to put film in some camera or because, for reasons of economy, I had taken out the film myself to give it to the supermarket for printing, instead to have it taken out by a photographer. One more time in my life that I made a salad... Anyway, these trips will remain unforgettable for me and I guess for Sophia as well, who since then never went to these cities except Como, because these cities are really beautiful. I went back to all but Turin. What impressed me about Turin was its wealth and its beauty. It had also royal palaces and a river with beautiful bridges and beautiful churches like this one, on which lies a sheet, on which is traced the outline of some man, which the priests claim is Christ's. The wealth and beauty of Turin made a great impression on me, because I knew Turin from the struggles held there in 1969 by the workers of the FIAT car industry, with the result that the image of a poor working town was engraved in my mind. And yet in Turin lived the royal family who united Italy with their army in the 19th century.

My daughter starts her school life in a primary school in Milan - I am translating "Memories of Women Terrorists" and studying French

In the fall of 1996, my daughter Kristiana went to school for the first time. She was enrolled in the public primary school in our neighborhood, again with the help of Massimo. Although we had made efforts she to learn some Italian words before she went to school, my daughter could not communicate in Italian. That's why on the first day I had asked to stay at the school during the lessons, to help Kristiana. They allowed me, something they certainly wouldn't do in Greece. Fortunately Kristiana turned out to be quite adaptable and didn't need my help. But the teachers also respected her, regardless of whether she was not Italian, as were not her two Arab classmates. I call it respect the fact that they did not force her, neither her nor the Arabs, to take religious classes. The teacher who did Religious Studies, when it was time to do her lesson, would take the children who wanted to do Religious Studies and lead them to another room. And another thing that Kristiana enjoyed in the Italian school that she never enjoyed in a Greek school is that she ate inside the school. Each parent paid for the food according to their finances. We, being unemployed in Italy, did not pay anything for our daughter's food. The school was finishing at half past four in the afternoon and that's why two teachers worked in each class every day.

Our stay in Milan may have given my daughter the opportunity to start learning Italian, but it also gave me the opportunity to improve my Italian. I even improved them in the way I thought most appropriate: By translating. Ever since we had stayed in Perugia, ten years before, I had in my hands an Italian book of autobiographies of three Russian women revolutionaries of the 19th century, entitled "Memories of Women Terrorists." I considered that this book deserved to be translated into Greek, not only because in this way I would improve my Italian, but also because these female revolutionaries with their autobiographies presented an unknown for the Greeks image of the Russian revolutionary movement, which had played a pivotal role in world history with the Russian revolution of February 1917 (based on the old calendar) and had also given the anarchist movement leading theorists of anarchy such as Bakunin and Kropotkin. This image had nothing to do with the false image of the Russian revolutionary movement that was spread in Greece by the communists, who presented Lenin, Stalin or even Trotsky as the creators of the Russian revolution of 1917. For them, the Russian revolution of 1917 was the October 1917 Bolshevik coup (always according to the old calendar). This false image was disproved by this book which I was given the opportunity to translate while I stayed in Milan. Unfortunately, it took many years for this book to be printed in Greece, but I did not expect something like this at the time I was translating it. I hoped it would

catch the attention of the anarchist publishers I knew, but I was wrong.

And it wasn't just my Italian that I improved while I stayed in Milan. I also improved my French, which I had recently studied again, when I attended intensive courses of this language at the French Institute of Athens, in 1994-1995. In particular, I studied a French grammar that I bought in Milan and read some French books that I borrowed from the Milan state library. Because of these pursuits, I can say that I made the most of my time in Milan.

But it was not only my personal pursuits that made my stay in Milan creative. This stay gave me the opportunity to offer services to the wider subversive movement, of which I can still be proud, as we will see below. This is because the next year (1997) would be for me the year that my struggle against conscription and militarism would be recognized internationally, more than ever before.

In Germany to represent the Association of C.O.s in receiving the peace and non-violence prize Friedrich Sigmund Schulze

It started with a letter from my friend, and associate in the Association, Nasos Theodoridis, with whom I corresponded throughout the time I was in Italy. In this letter Nasos informed me on behalf of the Association, that a German Christian organization, which defended conscientious objection, had instituted a prize for peace and non- violence and that, for 1997, this organization wanted to honor with this prize Greeks and Turks conscientious objectors. As a representative of the Greek objectors, it had chosen the Association of Conscientious Objectors and had requested that someone from the Association be present at the awarding ceremony that would take place in Germany. Since no one else from the Association was available to attend the ceremony, the Association suggested me. The travel expenses would be covered by the organization. Of course, I accepted and considered this proposal as a unique opportunity to return to Germany, not as a poor relative, as in 1983, but as an honored person. And indeed, as we will see below, I returned and what I obtained from my visit to Germany exceeded even my wildest imagination.

The award ceremony would take place in Hofgeismar, a small town in central Germany near Kassel, but I wouldn’t go there directly. The representative of the organization, who had undertaken the responsibility to act as my interpreter and to translate into German my speech of thanks, suggested that I go to see him in Bremen. The plane ticket to Bremen would be paid for by the organization, so I had no objection. So in February 1997 I found myself at Bremen airport, from where I was picked up and taken to his home by Günter Knebel, my interpreter. Günter was working in the organization's office in Bremen and sometime we passed by that office. At Knebel's house, which, after Leo Rosser's house in London, was the richest

house where I have been received in my life, I met his wife, who was sitting in a wheelchair, because she had been disabled by a traffic accident. She was a very good woman, who, judging by some photographs I happened to find in the room where I was lodged, must have held some ecclesiastical office, for I saw her dressed in a black cassock. She and her husband hosted me for two days in their home and also took me to the city center, where they showed me the sights. At last, I had begun to meet in Germany the treatment to which I was entitled. And Bremen was a very nice opportunity to experience this treatment. I was very impressed by its wealth. I had never seen such ultra-modern trams, like the ones I saw in Bremen, nor such neat streets and well-kept buildings. And some of them, like the town hall and the ward of commerce, were beautiful. Knebel and his wife, in fact, took me and I also saw the district with the fishermen's houses of the Middle Ages, some houses as small as dollhouses. They also took me to a luxurious, by my standards, restaurant and treated me. In general, while I stayed with them, I was treated as a figure of international standing and this made me feel vindicated in my struggle against conscription. This feeling was intensified by the fact that a journalist from a local newspaper came to Knebel's house and found me to photograph me and interview me. It is not a small thing to be treated as a personality in a western European country for a struggle, because of which you are treated as a criminal in your own country.

With Serdar Tekin at Hofgeismar to receive the award

From Bremen Knebel, myself and two others went to Hofgeismar in a small van. The award ceremony would take place the next day and until then we would be staying at the hotel where the award would take place. The hotel was located in Schöneberg, a small village near Hofgeismar, and was formerly a palace. In this palace I was entertained for three nights, and since then I have not been entertained in a palace again, as I had not been entertained before. In this hotel I also met the Turkish Serdar Tekin, who came to receive the award on behalf of the Anti-War Association of Izmir (Izmir). From what I learned from Serdar, all the members of the Anti-War League were total objectors. I don't think anyone in Turkey was claiming an alternative social service to military service. I also learned that, from Osman's comrade Murat Ulke, who was then in prison, Serdar had learned that the Islamist prisoners were on good terms with Osman, even though he was an atheist. In general, Serdar, who was some twenty years younger than me, was a pacifist, and therefore, on the eve of the event, we had a long discussion about armed guerrilla groups of America. Sherdar condemned them, while I maintained that they were creations of necessity and not of choice. I knew that those who, for the military

dictatorships of the time, had to be murdered as dangerous opponents of the regime were hiding in the mountains or in the jungle. We did the discussions in English so we don't need interpreters.

Die Kriegsdienstverweigerer Filippos Kyritsis und Ali Serdar Tekin (von rechts) nahmen den Förderpreis für gewaltfreies Handeln entgegen. (Foto: Happel)

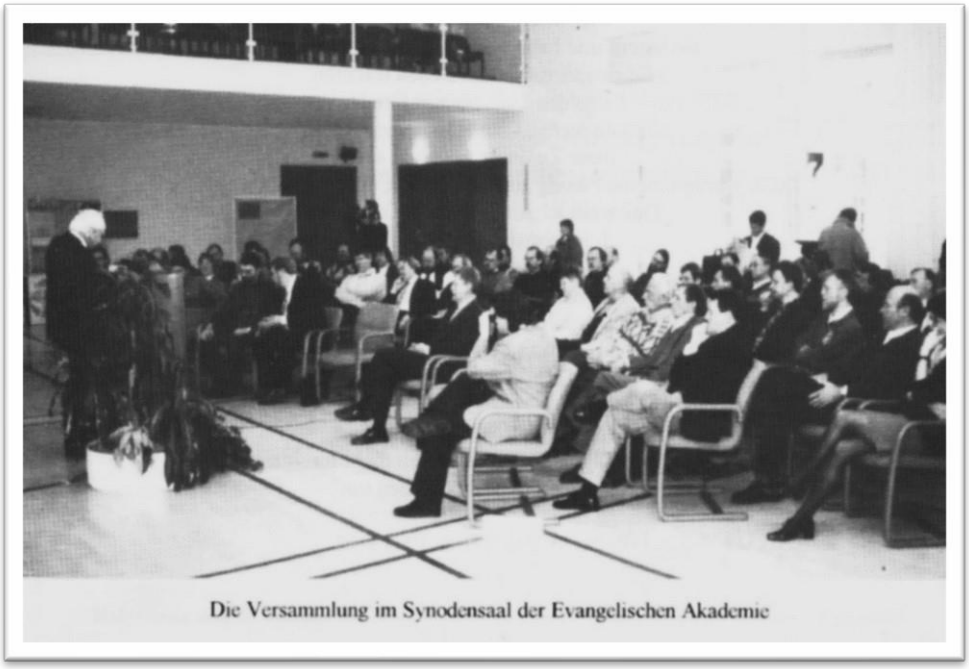
Me with Sherdar Tekin at the award ceremony

For the award ceremony that took place the next day, several dozen members of the organization had gathered at the hotel. Some of them were evangelical priests, i.e. Protestants, as the Greeks call them. After all, the one who gave his name to the award, Friedrich Sigmund-Sulze, was also a priest. Such was one who had previously come to Greece and had met the conscientious objectors Chrysovergis and Psychas. Also, the treasurer of the European Office for Conscientious Objection, Hans Dickmann, had come to the award, as well as a young German, who at that time was doing his alternative term at the offices of the European Office. This treasurer had suggested that I ask for political asylum in the Netherlands, where he was from, when he found out that I had left Greece to avoid being drafted, and he promised me that he would do everything he could for that. I, of course, had no intention of leaving Milan and embarking on adventures.

The Friedrich Sigmund-Schulze Award Ceremony

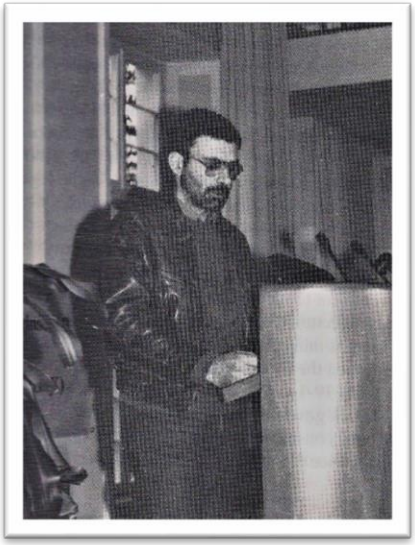
On the day of the award, before the ceremony, a Greek journalist from a German TV channel appeared in the vestibule of the large ceremony hall, together with a television crew, and interviewed me and Serdar Tekin. I, learning that he is Greek, gave the interview in Greek, while Sherdar gave it in English. Part of the interviews, along with scenes from military parades in Greece and Turkey, an aerial photograph of Imia (where the armed forces of the two countries had clashed the previous year)

and scenes from the ceremony, aired after the ceremony on the channel that the journalist was working.



The president of the organization that awarded us the peace prize is speaking in the room where the ceremony of the award took place. Left, near the edge of the photo is me with my translator Gunter Knebel

The ceremony, which took place in the great hall, included a speech by both me and Serdar. My own speech had been translated into German from English by Knebel and read by him, except for the beginning and the end, which I read in English. When I finished, I was congratulated by someone in the typical garb of evangelical priests, who I learned that was the bishop of Magdeburg. In my speech I blamed the Christian Orthodox Church of Greece, for its hostile attitude towards conscientious objectors, of which hundreds (religious) were still in prison at that time. The bishop, besides congratulating me, told me that the prevailing German Church was no better, and that it too had done much harm to the conscientious objectors. At the time, I was impressed by his attitude, because I had never seen any Greek bishop accusing the Greek Orthodox Church.



Reading my speech at the award ceremony

The award was presented by the president of the organization Jan Niemeler and included two honorary diplomas, one for the Greek Association of C.O.s and one for the Turkish Anti- War Association of Smyrna, as well as 10,000 German marks, of which he gave 5,000 to me and the other 5,000 to Serdar. It was in paper money wrapped in decorative paper. And after the award the program included live Greek and Turkish music, however, because the Greeks did not come, only Turkish music was played, by a Turkish sazz master.

President Niemeler displays the award. On the left, me with my translator Gunter Knebel

EAK-Bundesvorsitzender Jan Niemöller (links im Bild) mit Filippos Kyritis, Ali Serdar Tekin sowie Herrn Knebel von der EAK.

From left to right President Niemeler, myself, Serdar Tekin and Gunder Knebel

Militar« lautet die Ans
Staatsanwälte. Nach A
Strafgesetzes stehen d

Filippos Kyritsis: »Griechenland ist eine Macho-Gesellschaft. Wenn du nicht beim Militär warst, bist du ein Schlappschwanz und Verräter«

»Typisch für die Tü
weiß nie, woran man i
lich verweigert – ein Fa
te und den Gummipar
ist ihm nichts passiert,
Philosophie. Izmir ist
türkischen Behörden
sind verunsichert durc
die der Fall Ülke im
Melange aus Militärs
Fassade und Anarchie
können Osman Murat
ich im Osten sein.« Im V
Türkei sind die Soldate

FOTOS: ZIVIL

Another photo of me published in a German magazine accompanied by a comment about my award speech

The palace, where I was hosted and received, on behalf of the Association, the Friedrich Peace Prize Sigmund-Sulze

The events continue the next day as well – Greek journalist at Germany informs us that the objections in Greece will be recognized!

The next day at noon in the great hall, where the food was served, our hosts and we (me and Serdar) sat around a large table and before the food was served, they asked us to inform them about the action of our organizations in Greece and Turkey. I told them about our mobilizations for imprisoned Turkish dissidents, such as Osman Murat Ulke, while Serdar had nothing to say about their own mobilizations for Greeks, since Greek ideological conscientious objectors were not in prison at the time. And after the meal Serdar bade farewell with some very touching words to our hosts, for he had to leave for his native country before the end of the events. He made an appointment with me in Oslo, Norway, where the pan-European meeting of conscientious objectors would take place in the summer.

In the evening, the members of the organization gathered in a small room, sat around and began to read texts. I had gone too, because Knebel had asked me to, without understanding what they were saying, because they were speaking German. From what Knebel told me, the texts being read at this event were about the German attitude towards the Nazis, a positive attitude, which allowed the Nazis to carry out the Holocaust and all the other crimes, for which they became known, before and during the second world war.

I don't remember which day Knebel spoke on the phone with a Greek journalist from German radio, with whom he had arranged to come and interview me. I only remember that the journalist would not come, because he had been assured by the Greek

Minister of National Defense, Tsochatzopoulos, who was also in Germany at the time, that the demands of the objectors would be satisfied by the passing of a law, which would recognize conscientious objection and define an alternative civil service to the military. To Knebel, who relayed the journalist's words to me, I blamed the journalist for his withdrawal, because I considered Tsohatzopoulos's assurances to be false, since it was not the first time that our government was promising a law. I also cursed the very reporter that Knebel gave me on the phone, for the same reason. I could not imagine that Tsochatzopoulos was telling the truth. And yet! That year, after the Association's award, the government passed through Parliament a law that recognized conscientious objection and established an alternative term of twice the length of military service.

Back to Milan – What happened to the prize money

The next day, however, we all left for our homes and in particular I took the train to Kassel and from there a plane to Frankfurt, from where I would take the plane to Milan. Since I had a few hours before the plane left for Milan, I took a very short walk in Frankfurt, around the metro station from where I would return to the airport. What I found was that there were huge skyscrapers that spoiled the landscape jutting out among the beautiful traditional apartment buildings, and also that the main road in front of the main train station was full of Turkish shops. On this street, Turkish village women were walking around in traditional clothes, as if they were still in their village.

When I returned to Milan, I sent Nasos Theodoridis 4800 of the 5000 German marks of the award, to give to the Association. I had spent the 200 during the trip. I intended, in the future, to give these to the Association, but I did not succeed, because, until 2009, I was financially "with a noose around my neck". In 2009 I had severed my contacts with the Association, which was then defunct, and I considered it eccentric behavior to give this money after 12 years. After all, I cannot say that I am happy with the use the Association made of the prize money: At a meeting of the Association with only four people, at the suggestion of one of them, the Association bought from this person with the prize money his old computer, which never worked. And yet at that time there were no Association offices, only a weekly gathering place, and the Association had no money to even pay its share of the rent for a floor that the Movement for the Defense of Civil and Social Rights rented , together with the Association, above the cafe "Maps" of Valtetsiou Street. Finally, I sent the money to Theodoridis, because, as I have said before, I had a systematic correspondence with him while I stayed in Milan, and he had also made sure that the Association issued a resolution of support to me, because I had been forced into self-imposed exile, so as not to go to prison as an insubordinate.

My daughter suffers from grass allergy – We rediscover the Italian comrades who had hosted us in 1984

In Milan I devoted most of my time to translation. I also devoted some time to my children, because they were young and needed special care. For example, my children often got sick, especially Kristiana, who throughout the winter and spring suffered from a non-stop cough, which caught her in the evenings. Knowing, already from the time I was in Greece, that this cough was treated with antihistamines, I had asked for antihistamines at the neighborhood pharmacy but they didn't give me any, because they wanted a doctor's prescription. A pediatrician, from whom I had asked for a prescription, did not give me one, because she wanted us to do an allergy test first. Until the allergy test was done, months passed and until then Kristiana was unjustly tortured. This pediatrician with her medical advice had made the situation worse, because she had recommended for my daughter inhalations from a special machine that pharmacies rent. After a month of inhalations we stopped, because we didn't see any progress. We were seeing rather a deterioration. At least this pediatrician, like all pediatricians contracted by the state to care for the children of the unemployed as me, was free. The neighborhood doctor-pathologist was also free for the unemployed, and they referred you, if necessary, to other specialties or to a hospital. At the time I stayed in Milan, my neighborhood doctor was a good woman who, when I needed her for me sometime, not only did not take any money from me but she also gave me the medicines I needed free of charge, from a cupboard where she had collected samples.

One day I decided to call our old Italian friends and tell them that I was in Milan with Sophia and two children we had had during the time we had been out of touch. In particular, I called Patricia, with whom I had not been in contact since I had left Perugia, i.e. over ten years, and Loris and Katerina who had hosted us in Treviso during the International Anarchist Meeting of 1984. And I hadn’t communicate with them since then either. Unfortunately, we couldn't go to Perugia to see Patricia and she couldn't come to Milan either, so we didn't see her again after 1986. But we did see Loris and Katerina again, who took the train one day and came to Milan. We spent unforgettable days together with them, because we hosted them. With them we climbed an artificial hill located in Milan that was created from the rubble created by World War II bombing and other demolitions. Known as Montagnetta, it is the only hill from which Milan can be seen from above. This whole hill has been turned into a park and many people visit it. I was a frequent visitor, because I liked to walk among the trees and see Milan spread out in the distance.

My family with the comrades from Treviso who hosted us during the International Anarchist Meeting of 1984

With my comrade Katerina Spinela and my family on a mantel next to the artificial canal of Milan known as Navilio

My daughter's spectacular school year's end celebrations

In June of this year my daughter finished the first grade of elementary school in Milan. The end of the school year was celebrated with a performance by the children, in which my daughter also participated. This performance was performed twice. One in the center of Milan, in the Lita Palace, and the other in the school yard. The Lita Palace is a beautiful historical building and not a palace but in Italy palaces are called all the old buildings that have architectural value and are not just apartment buildings to house people. I, I confess, felt particularly proud that my daughter performed in such a building. I am, on the contrary, ashamed of myself, because the pictures I took during the performance came out blurry, because I did not handle the camera properly. But it was a very good reflex camera and I had previously read a whole book to learn how to take good pictures with such cameras. In a few words I doubled the error with the bad handling of the machine. My first error was that I was taking photos without film or I was taking the film out of the camera myself, without success, as I said above, and the second was that I was taking blurry photos at the Lita Palace. And as the ancients Greeks used to say: "No wise man sins twice."

The Lita Palace, where my daughter performed in the school play

And I didn't just made a mess in the Lita Palace. And in the school yard, where I filmed the performance with a video camera, I made a mess, because the battery of the camera was worn out, and not changing it due to lack of money, I quickly ran out of battery and filmed only excerpts from the excellent school year's end show. And yet, it was a very nice show about anti-racism and ecology, where groups of children had special costumes for the show and sang a song written especially for the show. Anyway, my daughter may not have done school year's end gymnastics shows like I did when I was in a private elementary school, but the show she was in worthed more. It's a pity that the following year my daughter did not continue her schooling in Milan. The whole family left for Greece, to spend the summer in Lefkada and take sea baths there, and then they could not return for financial reasons, as we will see below.

From the school year's end celebration at my daughter's elementary school. She is the third to the left of the girl in the orange shirt

Summer baths in Milan with a view of the planes rising in the sky

As I said above, this summer the Pan-European Meeting of Conscientious Objectors would take place in Oslo. It was scheduled for the last days of August. I had corresponded with the Norwegian organizer, who was responsible for hosting the foreign objectors, and told him that I would represent two associations, the Greek association and the Italian association, since no one from the Italian association was interested to attend the meeting and they had no objection to me representing them. In general, the Italian objectors I met were not interested in international contacts and that was the reason they had entrusted me with the association's international correspondence. However, they had no objection to systematically informing me of their action, so that I, in turn, could inform those who would come to the pan-European meeting. Another thing I want to mention about my communication with the Norwegian is that he told me to look for plane tickets and when I told him the prices of the Italian airline, Alitalia, he thought I was trying to rip him off because they were about four times those of the Scandinavian airlines. This made me speak to him a bit aggressively, telling him that Greece and Italy are not only for holidays but also have a conscientious objectors' movement, which deserves some respect, so if he didn't want to, that movement wouldn't be represented in the meeting. Finally, he booked tickets with the Scandinavian airline and the misunderstanding ended, without it leaving a shadow of suspicion between us. He also reserved a bed for me for three days in the hostel where the meeting was to take place.

Since my family left for Greece, until the end of August, I regularly went to a large park that was around an artificial lake. It was located next to Linate Airport. In this lake one could bathe and I did not miss the opportunity to go, almost every day, for a bath. I didn't pay on the buses, I also put the Walkman headphones in my ears and felt like a king. I lived in one of the nicest cities in the world, I took my baths for no money, and I expected to fly to Norway one day, on one of the planes that I kept seeing take off every time I went to the lake for a bath. As I said before, the lake was next to the airport, so you could always see the planes taking off from there. Also, not only Italians came to the park to swim or to barbecue or even to relax. Most of the visitors were foreigners, like me, and so I felt not so much that I was in Italy but in a paradise open to all races of the world. In it I felt like a king though I was completely alone, having no one to talk to. I was probably to blame for this too, since I failed to network with the anarchists, even though I had gone with Sophia or by myself to their demonstrations, such as a large one, with about three thousand people, which was held as a protest against the eviction of a squat, and ended in squatting of another building. With Sophia, apart from the new squat, we had also searched, one night, the offices of the most famous anarchist collective in Milan. We had found them in a traditional detached house in a large garden, which seemed so opulent to me that I decided not to visit it, so as not to feel like a poor relative. On?"

the other hand, I couldn't go and tell them: "Hello, we are anarchists from Greece." I assumed they would say to me in their own way, "So what?”

I'm flying to Norway! Another dream of my life is coming true

Finally the day came to take the plane to Oslo, something I had been waiting for not only all summer but all my life, because Norway, from what I had learned, I expected to be of great interest, as was Denmark, the other Scandinavian country that I had got to know in 1983. Scandinavian countries were famous for their standard of living which was higher than other countries in Europe, if we exclude Switzerland and some other states, so I was very curious to get to know this level up close, even if only for a few days. In short, I have been very lucky in my life, because the pan-European meeting of objectors took place that year (when I could participate) in Norway, where I always dreamed of going. And, in fact, life brought it in such a way that I did not go as a simple visitor but as a guest of the Norwegian Association of Conscientious Objectors, which had undertaken the organization of the pan-European meeting. Even my plane tickets were paid for by the Norwegians. And I was entitled to all this, because I had the honor of representing the associations of conscientious objectors of two countries: Greece and, above all, Italy, which is a large and rich European country and not a poor relative of the "European family", like Greece.

Unfortunately, inside the plane, I didn't feel so comfortable, because on the one hand I had with me the ugliest bag of all the passengers and on the other a Norwegian man, probably accompanying a girl, abruptly kicked me out of the seat next to her, telling me that the plane was empty and I could go and sit elsewhere. At least, when I left my seat, I found an empty seat at a window, and, as it was day, I saw from above central and northern Europe, with the high mountains of Switzerland, the vast plains of Germany, and the perfectly flat islands of Denmark. The plane landed in Denmark and from there I took another to Oslo, which I was also lucky enough to see from above, as I was traveling during the day in very good weather. An impressive sight, because Oslo is a relatively small European capital surrounded by a forest full of houses. If in Greece, also, they had allowed houses to be built in the forest, so many forests would have been saved from the mobsters who are real estate developers and burn them down, bribing afterwards ("under the table") the responsible forestry offices and the responsible urban planning offices to declassify them as forests. But the relevant law was probably made for this purpose: To make money the mafia-connected employees of the forest offices and urban planning offices. After all, the Environmentalists- Alternatives party had warned, when this law was passed in 1990-1991, that it would lead to the burning of the forests of Greece.

At Oslo airport I was the only passenger that the cops didn't let pass without a problem. I was traveling with my Greek ID and Norway was not in the European Union where I could travel with an ID. But I had been informed by the Norwegian consulate in Milan that I could travel to Norway with an ID and, for better or for worse, I had officially translated my ID at the Greek consulate in Milan. My passport had expired and the Greek consulate wouldn't renew it, so I couldn't travel with a passport. The cops at the Oslo airport let me through without a problem, because my ID had no expiration date, like all the other IDs they knew. So they took me into an office and started the questions. I showed them the official translation of my ID and they compared it with my ID which only had Greek. Since Greek is not "Chinese" to those who use the Latin alphabet, like Norwegians, the cops figured out that my ID was the translated document and eventually let me through after stamping the translation with the entry stamp, which included the date of entry. I was told that I had the right to stay for three months and during that time I could look for a job, as I had been told by the Norwegian consulate in Milan. If I would find a job, they told me, I could extend my stay. I told them that I had only come for five days and not for three months. Nor did I tell them the reason for which I had come, because knowing the antipathy that the Greek police have towards those who do not go to the army, I was afraid that the same thing would happen to the Norwegians and I would have trouble. Be that as it may, at least I was accepted in Norway, while my Turkish friend Serdar Tekin, with whom we received the Friedrich Sigmund-Schulze Prize together, did not manage to come to Norway as we had arranged, because, no matter how he tried, Norway didn't give him a visa. I learned this from the German objector who was doing his alternative term in the offices of the European Office for Conscientious Objectors and had come to the award ceremony in Hofgeismar. He had also come to the meeting of the objectors in Oslo. And yet the Norwegian conscientious objectors must have tried to secure a visa for Serdar Tekin as well, judging by the fact that they had released at the time a whole CD of songs, to support the fight for the release of the Turkish objector Osman Murat Ulke, comrade and friend of Serdar Tekin. This CD, among other things, I took with me as a souvenir of the meeting when I left Norway.

Translated from Greek to English - www.onlinedoctranslator.com

The Haraldsheim hostel in Oslo, where the pan-European meeting of conscientious objectors took place

From the airport I took a bus to the main train station, where, to my pleasant surprise, I saw no police patrolling, only a woman cop at a desk, sitting by herself. Apart from the absence of police officers, what impressed me at the station were the prices. They were selling kebabs for 2,000 drachmas each, i.e. about 6 euros each, and oranges that were about the same price per kilo. Later, when after days on a walk I had to buy a bottle of water because I was too thirsty, I found that the bottle (half a liter) cost around 700 drachmas, i.e. two euros! During my stay in Oslo I had the opportunity to find out that Norway was the most expensive country I had ever visited. Fortunately I didn't have to pay for my stay there.

I didn't have to make any expenses because I stayed, as I said, in a guest house, where every morning I could eat as much breakfast as I wanted. In fact, I could choose what to eat from a wide variety of dishes. I remember not eating all day, because in the morning I ate until "bursting". I usually filled three trays with edibles before I was full. If the hostel staff were Norwegian, I would be a bit ashamed of what I did. But the clerks were Indian or Pakistani or Bangladeshi, as I assumed from their appearance, and I was not at all embarrassed about that. I was not ashamed, because I thought that they, at least, would not pity me for my poverty. I also didn't pay the ticket of the tram, which I used to get for the hostel from the city center. Because of all the other objectors I happened to be traveling with, I was the only one who didn't punch a ticket, sometime, a Norwegian objector with whom I had a very good relationship, tried to get me a ticket. He didn't succeed, however, no matter how hard he tried to scare me about the consequences if I was caught without a ticket. I did not think that I was risking anything more than a fine, which I would not pay, because after a few days I would be leaving Norway.

I was lucky enough to stay with the only conscientious objector who came from Latin America! – The arrogant Slovenians objectors

In the hostel, I was lucky enough to stay in the same room as the only objector who had come, for the meeting, from South America, specifically from Ecuador (Ecuador). Unfortunately the room had not only two beds but four. Specifically, it had two bunk beds. In one I stayed below and the Latin American above and in the other two Slovenians, with whom I never got along, because they seemed to me too snooty. Their country had only gained independence five years ago, so I still saw them as Yugoslavs, as I would have seen them before the breakup of Yugoslavia. I found it a bit difficult to digest arrogant Yugoslavs . But they came from a country indeed more civilized than Greece, whose capital, Ljubljana, was a purely European city and very

beautiful. Maybe that made them arrogant. I only said hello to them, because it seemed to me that when they spoke to me, they were mocking me. With the Latin American, however, I had many discussions and thus learned that there were remarkable movements of conscientious objectors in the Latin American countries. These were subject to much greater repression than they were in Europe. This friend was very knowledgeable about the situation in South America and had brought with him an album of photos of the protests in Ecuador. For this reason he also gave the most interviews of anyone else in the Norwegian media, without me being so sure about it that I would "put my hand in the fire" for it.

Side 6 NB Nr. 3 oktober 1997

Latinamerika træder ud af diktaturets skygge.

Militæret retfærdiggør sig selv i ny humanitær rolle.

Vinicio Jimenez er en 25-årig militærnægter fra Equador. Vinicio Jimenez deltog som „æresgæst" ved dette års europæiske nægtermøde, hvor han beskrev og analyserede militærnægterforholdene i Latinamerika. Her gengivet i noget forkortet og forenklet form.

Af Peter Mikael Hansen

Hærens nye klæder

Den såkaldte nye verdensorden har også sat sine spor i Latinamerika. En af de mest markante ændringer er afvikningen på artiers diktatur i flere latinamerikanske lande. Hæren ændrer sig i takt med denne udvikling. Under de fleste diktaturer bekæmpede hæren kommunismen. Nu forsøger hæren at spille rollen som det nye samfunds forsvarer. Hæren bygger skoler, veje og spiller i det hele taget en dominerende rolle i samfundet. Overalt på det sydamerikanske kontinent udnytter hæren sin hidtidige magt og infrastruktur til at sætte sig fungt på de „nye samfunds" udvikling. Hæren her dermed fået en ny økonomisk og social magt. Hæren prøver dermed at vise sig i et nyt venligt ikke-autoritært lys, og er således meget aktiv i sociale og infrastrukturelle henseender. I Equador for eksempel, hvor Vinicio Jimenez kommer fra, har det betydet at 70% nu accepterer hærens eksistens.

Ulv i fåreklæder

Men synet bedrager. „Hærens logik og attitude består", udtaler Jimenez til NB. „Hæren bruger nye våben, men målet er det samme, nemlig at have stor indflydelse på regering. Indflydelsesniveauet er næsten det samme som for „demokratiets" indførelse", siger Jimenez. Hæren har ikke mistet betydning siden diktatorernes fald. Måske tværtimod hvis man påtænker hærens nyerhvervede sociale rolle. Udvikling i Latinamerika involverer hæren. Jimenez påpeger at hærens stadig har indbygget

Vinicio - militærnægter fra Equador

udemokratiske tendenser mildest talt, og hæren tøver ikke med at benytte dem. For bekæmpede hæren kommunismen som sagt, nu bekæmper hæren narko og sociale oprør. I samarbejde med politi og andre halvmilitære grupperinger bekæmpes fattigdommen med militære midler! I Jimenez's øjne står hæren som garant for neo-liberalismen og hegemoniets beskytter.

Arbejder for freden

Vinicio Jimenez arbejder i Grupo de OC - den Equadorianske militærnægterbevægelse. Jimenez var med til at grundlægge bevægelsen tilbage i 1994. Han betalte selv for ikke at gå i militæret, men har senere returneret „betalingsbeviset" for at stå frem offentligt som nægter. Jimenez fortæller at der fortiden er få militærnægtere i Equador der offentligt afviser hæren. Det er ikke mange, men tallet skal ses i lyset af landets historie og udvikling. Dette er formentlig kun begyndelsen. I Equador er værnepligten 1 år og obligatorisk for alle. Landet har ingen rigtig nægterordning, men formelig blev det muligt at afhjene en ikke-væbnet værnepligt indenfor hærens rammer. Rigtige nægtere bliver fængslet.

Håb forude

At nægtere bliver fængslet er typisk for militærnægternes forhold i Latinamerika. De lande der har en obligatorisk værnepligt lovner ingen eller ringe mulighed for militærnægtelse. Der er dog få undtagelser. Paraguay har som det hidtil eneste latinamerikanske land anerkendt militærnægtere ved lov. Noget lignende bevæger Bolivia sig imod. Paraguays lovgivning er dog repressiv, og Jimenez forudser at lovgivning i de respektive lande indføres gradvist, og hvor det er de første nægtere der må tage de værste og hårdeste straffe, inden regeringerne indfører acceptable ordninger. I langt de fleste lande ryger man i fængsel og taber sine civile rettigheder. Men det kan undgås. Hæren vil helst undgå kritik og negativ opmærksomhed. Det giver næring til militærnægtergrupperne i latinamerika, der skyder op rundt omkring, anført af anslået 6000 nægtere i Paraguay. □

Grupo de CO arbejder for aktiv ikke-vold og basale privilegier til alle. Andre erklærede mål for bevægelsen er beskyttelsen af menneskerettighederne, frihed til militærnægtere, beskyttelse af kultur- og meningsforskelle og anerkendelse og respekt for de indfødte. I det hele taget social retfærdighed som base for udvikling og solidaritet.

The Latin American comrade Vinithio Jimenez whom I was lucky enough to have as a roommate in a page of the anti-militarist magazine NB dedicated to him

I found out how much separated me from the Slovenians the day after I arrived at the hostel, during one of the discussions that took place during the pan-European meeting in the hostel's conference room.

Den slovenske militærnægter deligation

The Slovenian objectors, "my roommates", which seemed to me snooty and ironic

Before talking about the debate, I will refer to two previous incidents. One is that the representative of Croatia also appeared as a representative of Italy, which unfortunately I had to refute by presenting the data for Italy that Roberto Minervino, of the Italian Association, had given me. The Croat, fortunately, didn't get embarassed and told me that he had met other Greek objectors, such as Sotiropoulos, to whom he told me to give greetings. The other incident was my argument with the representative of the European Office for Conscientious Objectors. This followed my speech on the state of objectors in Greece, where, among other things, I accused the Office of giving a false image of Greece when it celebrated the passing in Greece of the law recognizing conscientious objection and establishing the alternative, to the military, civil service. This law that Tsochatzopoulos had brought to the Parliament, as he had promised in Germany, and had already been passed, was a law that had little to do with the demands of the Association. It established for the objectors a civilian service of double duration in comparison with the normal military service, in places far from the city where they lived, and under the supervision of the Ministry of National Defense. Also, to be recognized as a conscientious objector, one had to go through a committee run by the military. These conditions, as later history proved, were highly deterrent to those who wanted to do alternative service, and very few, except Jehovah's Witnesses, did civil service in the years that followed. As if my disapproval of the law on the recognition of conscientious objection that had been passed in Greece was not enough, I declared at the meeting that I would not accept any term, because I was a total objector. With all that, despite representing the associations of C.O.s of two

countries, I was the only one who was not applauded for his speech at the pan-European meeting of conscientious objectors.

The representative of Serbian conscientious objectors Bojan Aleksov: An authentic anti-nationalist!

Anyway, I think that total objector was also Bojan Aleksov, a professor from Serbia who represented the Serbian opposition and who belonged to the organization "Women in Black", an organization that had opposed the wars waged by Serbia against Bosniaks and Kosovars. At that time the war in Bosnia was over, but it was not over in Kosovo. The war in Kosovo ended two years later, after months of bombing of Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, by NATO planes. I will never forget that Serbian professor, because when I told him that I thought the Serbs were even worse than the Greeks, who had committed so many crimes because of their nationalism, he instead of getting angry agreed and told me that the Serbs were even worse than I thought . It is rare to find a man as free from nationalism as this Serbian objector. He, with what he said about the situation in Serbia, made me realize that there was another, unknown to me, Serbia, different from the one that the Greek mass media had been showing us. This was the Serbia of the fighters against Serbian nationalism, fighters who suffered far more consequences for their struggle than their Greek counterparts.

Me with the representative of Serbia on the left, in the courtyard of the hostel where we were hosted

As I said before, I found out how much separated me from the Slovenians during the discussions at the pan-European meeting. These followed the suggestions of the representatives of each country and the guest speakers. In one of these discussions, I disagreed with the Slovenians about whether an objector should also be anti-militarist. Considering the choice to refuse conscription as a moral choice, I argued that it is not right for the objectors to look only to get rid of the military themselves, but also to fight within a movement, which supports the abolition of the military, or at least its replacement from something else, like the armed people. The Slovenes and some others argued that refusing conscription is a personal choice and those who do so have no obligation to fight for others in the context of an anti-militarism movement. I found this point of view very selfish and, of course, very self-interested the Slovenes who supported it. With this view they justified the suspicion I felt towards them from the first moment I met them.

NB

TIDSSKRIFT FOR ANTIMILITARISME

Udgivet af Militærnægterforeningen | Nr. 3 Oktober 1997 | Abonnement: Kr. 150.-

Nægtertallet stiger

Antallet af militærnægtere har de seneste år ligget på omkring 350 hvert halvår, men i 97 har der været en kraftigt stigning i antallet af folk, der ikke vil have noget med militæret og Beredskabskorpset at gøre. 444 slap ud af militærets klør i 1. halvår af 97 - det er en stigning på 21,6% i forhold til 1. halvår af 96. *Læs side 10*

Antal militærnægtere 1. halvar 1994-97

År	Antal nægtere
1994	350
1995	366
1996	365
1997	444

Kilde: Indenrigsministeriets Militærnægteradministration

Foto: Peter Mikael Hansen

En serbisk og kroatisk militærnægter arm i arm

Sommer sessionsraids

Er der en sammenhæng mellem MNFs sessionsraids og nægtertallets stigende kurve?

Læs side 22

ECOM

Europæisk Nægtermøde

Det Europæiske Nægtermøde 1997 (ECOM - Europaen Conscientious Objectors Meeting) blev denne gang afholdt i Oslo. Foruden nægterforeninger og fredsbevægelser fra Grækenland, Italien Slovenien, Ungarn, Kroatien, Serbien, Rusland, Norge, Sverige, Holland og Frankrig deltog Militærnægterforeningen og AMK fra Danmark. Men også en repræsentant fra Equador havde fundet vej til det Europæiske Nægtermøde.

Læs side 3

The representative of Serbia to the left with the representative of Croatia to the right, on the cover of the Danish anti-militarism magazine for the European Meeting of C.O.s

I spoil the idyllic atmosphere by countering a progressive general of NATO – I defend the Latin American rebels

I do not remember whether the meeting lasted two or three days. I remember, however, that on another day from the day of the representatives' presentations, they were invited and came and spoke to us some "high-ranking" persons, such as a Norwegian university professor, who spoke to us about the human rights of objectors based on the international and domestic law, and a NATO general, who also supported conscientious objection. I remember that the only one who, in a way, criticized the hypocrisy of the main NATO partners, the Americans, was me. In particular, the general said that NATO engages in wars because it defends international law, and I, in the debate that followed his speech, said that NATO's main partner, the U.S.A., has shown that it is also involved in unjust wars, such as the war of Vietnam, where it was not defending any rights. Fortunately the general was not prejudiced and therefore admitted that the Americans were wrongly involved in the Vietnam War. I don't think I would have gotten the same answer if the general had been Greek.

Also, within the framework of the meeting, workshops were created, i.e. working groups on specific topics, the results of which would be published. I chose a workshop on the relationship between conscientious objection and guerrilla warfare, having in mind, when I was referring to guerrilla warfare, Latin American guerrilla warfare, about which, until then, I had read some things. In the same workshop also participated the Latin American objector and a Dane, tall and very likable. In this workshop I supported the view that I had supported in Hofgeismar, that is, for some people it is not a question of whether they will join a guerrilla, since, if they do not, they will be killed by the army or the paramilitary death squads, which in military dictatorships systematically exterminate those they consider to be, or may become in the future, political opponents of the regime.

Moments of relaxation and cheerfulness: The trip to the islet in the Oslo bay and the visit to the Norwegian beer hall – The conscientious objector that looked like an SS soldier

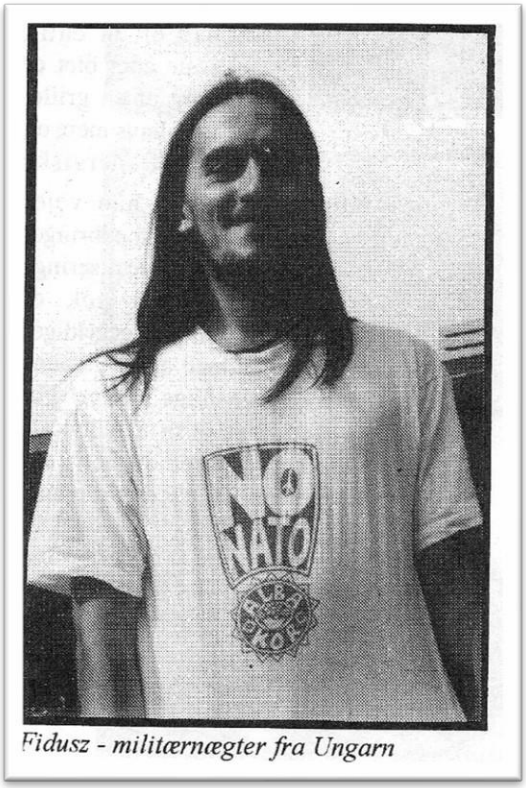
As part of the meeting, in addition to its work, the organizers had planned an excursion to one of the islands in front of the Oslo harbor, and a visit to a beer bar. I, in those days, made more company with a Frenchman, Nicolas, who, together with another Frenchman, represented the French objectors. With him, during the excursion to one of the islets, I found a rocky shore where one could bathe. I didn't have a swimsuit with me, but, at some distance, I saw an old woman entering the sea without wearing anything, and therefore I decided to bathe myself. Although we were in such a northern part of Europe, the sea was not at all cold in those last days of August. Since then, I have never bathed in a so northern place.

From our visit to the beer bar, where our beers were paid by the Norwegian objectors, I remember the conversation I had with the objector, with whom I had corresponded before coming to the meeting. When we sat down in the beer bar, he had sat down near some other objectors, but, being bored with them, he left them, and came and sat down near me, because I had excited his interest by quarrelling with him in the correspondence between us, which had preceded. Although it wasn't very polite towards a man who was paying for my trip, as he looked an awful lot like a German SS, like the ones the Nazis used to show in their propaganda films (tall, blond, and hard-featured), I took the courage and I told him that. He revealed to me that his grandmother had mated with an SS soldier during the war and because of that, after the war, she had undergone public shaming. I also learned from him that in Norway, students entering university are given a large loan by the state, which they are obliged to repay after they finish university and get a job. In fact, the state finds them jobs. Of course, with all the good things I was seeing and hearing, I was beginning to feel, because of my ethnic background, like a poor relative. Therefore, to this Norwegian objector I declared that, although I recognized the superiority of the welfare state of Norway over the welfare state of my "home country," Norway would not be enough for me if I had to confine myself to it all my life. Then he told me that his sister had married a black man and was living in central Africa and he had already stayed with her for a year. What he said to me, without a doubt, blew my mind.

An evening in the "tourist" part of the Oslo's harbor with the Hungarian objectors and the assignment to me of the initiative to create in Greece an affiliate of the global organization for the prohibition of "anti-personnel mines"

The truth is, subconsciously, this Norwegian objector had some prejudice against me. I realized it the other day, when we had to leave, because the meeting was over. I remember him telling me that they would pay me for the three days I stayed in the hostel and that there was nothing else they could do for me. As if, because I came from southern Europe, I expected the Norwegians to take care of me like a poor relative. Luckily, I didn't need him. However, I had no intention of leaving the hostel as the others, because I wanted to stay a few more days in Oslo, to see the sights. I could do it because the plane ticket they had issued me had the return date open, and even though I had no money, I could pay for the hostel with a credit card I had. The bad thing is that the card expired the next day, so I needed to pay the hostel in advance, which was not usual. In the end, although they had some objections at the reception, I managed and paid in advance for my stay.

Even before the end of the work of the meeting I had seen something from Oslo. I remember that one evening I had walked a lot by the harbor together with two Hungarian objectors. One of them, in fact, sometime had taken me with him to a hotel, where an international conference was being held on the subject of the prohibition of "anti- personnel" mines, of which the borders of Greece, at Evros, had several by that time, with the consequence that several immigrants who crossed the border illegally had been killed or injured by them.



Fidusz - militærnægter fra Ungarn

The conscientious Hungarian objector who took me with him to the international conference

During a break in the conference, this Hungarian introduced me to an activist he knew, who was participating in the conference and she took the opportunity to give me a file with material, in order to establish in Greece an affiliate of the international organization that fought for the ban of anti-personnel mines. I this file, when I returned to Greece, I gave it to Spyros Psychas, because I considered that he had the necessary contacts to set up an affiliate of the above organization. I did not have them and therefore I was not in a position to establish such a department. This organization, after some time, received the Nobel Peace Prize for its work. From the material the girl had given me, I was left with a T-shirt with a photo of a black man

with an amputated arm and leg because of such mines, and a slogan against mines.

Impressive sights in Norway's small capital – A cathedral church leveled by Protestant Christians (evangelicals) – Munch's famous painting "The Scream"

On the first day I started sightseeing in Oslo, I accidentally ran, on the street, into a Norwegian objector I had seen at the meeting. When he learned that I was interested in the sights of Oslo, he suggested that I visit Frogner Park which is full of statues by the Norwegian sculptor Vigeland. To convince me of the value of the statues, he told me that Hitler had visited this park and admired them. I, of course, and without this "advertisement" I would have gone to see these statues, as I did that very day. Indeed, these statues which were over 200, all life size, and depicting naked people of all ages, were quite impressive. On a hill at the far end of the park there was also a tall obelisk made of a cluster of such statues. Seeing that all these statues depicted people with ideal proportions, I understood why Hitler liked them. They were liked because they matched the aesthetics of the totalitarian regimes of the time, Nazi, Fascist and Communist, which flattered the people by portraying ordinary people as models of proportions and beauty. Fascists and Nazis saw their nation in statues of such proportions, while the communists saw their "glorious" proletariat and their "proud" peasantry. To denounce this art form, the most famous Polish director, Andrzej Wajda, had already directed two landmark films: "The Man of Marble" and "The Man of Iron". For me, if this art form is not for propaganda purposes, it has aesthetic interest, as long as its creations are beautiful. We can compare them with the ancient Greek statues of the classical era, i.e. of the 5th century before Christ, because they also do not depict man with his real proportions but with ideal proportions.

The next day I visited Akershus Castle, which is at the edge of the harbor. It is a medieval castle that is located on a hill and in its "grounds" are the tombs of the Norwegian kings of the centuries up to the 14th as well as the 20th century. In the intervening centuries Norway had no kings because it was part of the Danish kingdom. That's why even Oslo had another name, a name taken from the name of most Danish kings. They were called Kristian, so Oslo, until 1925, was called Kristiania. This castle is very beautiful, but even more beautiful was the tour guide, a blonde Norwegian woman in traditional village clothing. The tour was included in the ticket and was in English so I had no problem. I was particularly impressed by the toilet in the castle's great ceremonial hall, which was a recess in the wall the size of a telephone booth. There, at the time they used it, there was a container in which they defecated, because there was no running water, as there was in the Roman toilets, and certainly not a cistern. I was also impressed by the castle prisons

which consisted of dungeons with a low ceiling and sloping terrain. According to what the tour guide told us, these prisons were so unsanitary that most of the prisoners died within a few months.

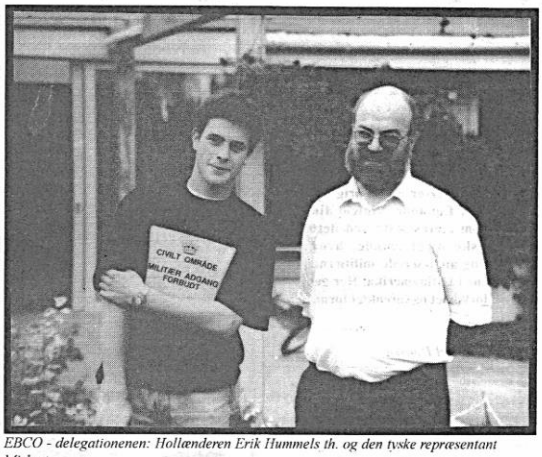
I don't remember if it was that night or the night before, that I wanted to visit some Catholic church in Oslo. I couldn't visit the Evangelical (Protestant) Cathedral because it was closed for maintenance, like the Perugia Cathedral, while I was there. It was dark when I reached a park, where I believed that before the religious reformation there was the temple. I expected to see an outstanding church from an aesthetic point of view and I only found a few tombstones on the earth where the floor of the church had been, under which Norwegian bishops had "rested" in the past. I assumed that the temple was demolished during the religious reformation. That night, from the elevated edge of the city, where I stood, I gazed into the distance at the lights of the city and its harbor, and a melancholy seized me, for I suspected that I should never again see this fine European capital. As it happened.

On my last day in Oslo I visited its archaeological museum which had exhibits from the Viking era, as well as a representation of their ship. Despite the fact that the museum was free, as I was looking at the exhibits, a guard approached me and informed me about a bunch of things about the exhibits and their time. This made a great impression on me, because it had never happened to me in a Greek museum before, nor did it happen to me after that, even if I paid in Greek museums. The national art gallery in Oslo, which I visited afterwards, was also free. Because it was a rainy day, there were no people, so I was given the opportunity to see the paintings in peace. Most memorable for me was Munch's famous painting "The Scream", which I saw hanging on a wall, not because of its artistic value but because, observing it carelessly by myself, I found myself among a crowd of Japanese people whom their tour guide he was talking about the painting and also why, some years later, that painting was stolen. It was found again years later and is now so guarded that no one can observe it up close.

Finally, I also took a walk in the garden of the royal palace of Oslo, which is located on a hill at the end of the central avenue of the city. I was impressed that it was not closed to the public under the guise of security reasons for the royal family. Anyway, Oslo is beautiful and its girls are even more beautiful. I have never seen so many beautiful girls before. And since many of them are naturally blonde, after my visit to Oslo, I started to dislike the dyed blonde hair I see on Greek women, especially when they are older.

altså retten til alternativ tjeneste, men parlamentet diskutterer udformningen af en sådan tjeneste. Siden 1993 har man afventet denne nye lov. Sådan som udkastet ser ud nu er der flertal for en slags ikke-væbnet tjeneste indenfor systemet, men det mener Elena Vilneskaya fra Mothers of Soldiers er værre end ingen lov. Derfor er en af hovedopgaver for Mothers of Soldiers at få større indflydelse på loven. Elena fortæller til NB at unge i Rusland ikke kender til deres egne basale menneskerettigheder, og og når unge værnepligtige så forsøger at undvige militæret havner de ofte i kriminalitet. Der er forskellige ideer om civil værnepligt i det russiske parlament, men som Elena forklarer til NB, så indeholder de alle en militaristisk tankegang.

Mothers of Soldiers arbejder blandt andet med kurser i menneskerettigheder, oplyser om militærnægtelse og støtter det Antimilitaristiske Radikale Parti.



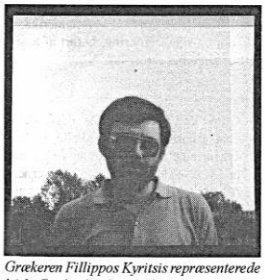
EBCO - delegationenen: Hollænderen Erik Hummels th. og den tyske repræsentant Mirko tv.

Italien

I Italien blev militærnægtelse anerkendt ved lov i 1972. Siden er loven ikke blevet modificeret. I 1996 var der 40.000 nægtere. „Mange bliver nægtere fordi det er bedre end militæret", siger Filippos Kyritsis til NB. Filippos repræsenterer både Grækenland og Italien. Filippos fortæller at antimilitarismen står svagt i Italien, og at unge mænd nægter af pragmatiske grunde. Filippos påpeger at militæret udøver vold, voldtægt og tortur selv under FN-aktioner, senest dokumenteret i Somalia.

Totalnægtere idømmes 1 måneds fængsel og desertering straffes med op til 8 måneders fængsel.

Nægterbevægelsen i Italien forsøger at forbedre den nuværende lov, fortæller Filippos, men samtidig ønsker kræfter i parlamentet at nægtere i højere grad skal arbejde mere direkte for staten så den sparer penge. Igen i stil med den tyske ordning, hvor sundhedsvæsenet stort set er afhængig af nægtere. En model Slovenien i høj grad benytter.



Grækeren Fillippos Kyritsis repræsenterede både Grækenland og Italien.

Grækenland

De græske fredsaktivisters kamp for militærnægtelse er lang, stenet og grufuld. Militærnægtere i Grækenland har været underkastet en lang og undertrykkende historie ofte dokumenteret i NB. Med til historien hører Grækenlands forhold efter anden verdenskrig, og grækernes forhold til deres naboer specielt Tyrkiet hvilket siden 1984 har anbragt landet i generel mobilisering. Det er i hvert fald den ydre trussel der er den officielle forklaring på landets generelle mobilisering.

Indtil for få måneder siden anerkendte Grækenland som det eneste land i EU ikke militærnægtere. Ny „pseudo-lov" anerkender nu militærnægtelse. Men som Filippos siger er det en pseudo-lov udelukket udformet til at tilfredsstille det internationale samfund. Filippos mener at loven er en banalitet, som ikke udføres i praksis. Loven er straffende. Længden af nægtertjenesten er således 18 måneder længere end militærtjenesten, altså 3.5 år! Hele spørgsmålet om denne nye lov har splittet den græske nægterbevægelse. På den ene side står modstanderne af den nye lov repræsenteret på dette års ECOM af Filippos. Filippos mener loven er et slag i ansigtet på nægterne med dens ydmygende og straffende karakter, som iøvrigt kun er til for at tækkes kritikere. På den anden side står skeptiske tilhængere som ser loven som et skridt i rigtig retning. Nægtere i Grækenland har tidligere flygtigt, levet under jorden eller blevet fængslet. Idag sidder ca. 350 Jehovas Vidner i græske fængsler på grund af deres politiske overbevisning. De vil nu søge om nægterstatus.

Holland

Holland har indført professionel hær. Men militærnægterbevægelsen eksisterer stadig. Istedet for nægtelse fokuserer nægtergrupperne i Holland på „at med en professionel hær betaler man bare nogen andre for at slå ihjel", som Erik Hummels fra EBCO udtryker det. Desuden koncentreres det antimilitaristiske arbejde sig om skattenægtelse og internationalt samarbejde. □

Page 5 of the Norwegian anti-militarist magazine NB, which refers to the pan-European meeting of conscientious objectors. Above the two EBCO representatives. I am pictured below left.

The State Library in Brera: An impressive library in the halls of an old monastery

When I returned to Milan, my family had not yet returned from Greece for financial reasons. I, having no work at home, spent my time out visiting the sights of Milan, that I hadn't seen, or reading books in the Milan State Library in the Brera district. This state library used to be a monastery and therefore had many voluminous theological books, which occupied a part of the shelves of the reading room. Surely these books were worth more for their appearance than for their content. In general the library rooms were very beautiful and it was a pleasure to read in such beautiful surroundings. Also, this library was also lending books published after 1925, something that the National Library of Greece didn't do by then. To borrow books, you needed an Italian ID and registration and luckily, I had an Italian ID and so I had borrowed books. It was also good that they gave you very old books in the reading room, such as a history of Venice that I had asked to leaf through, which was from the 17th century.

I am moving to the seventh floor of the apartment building on the Street of Stars

This is how I spent my time in Milan, until the owner of the apartment I was renting, suggested that I leave his apartment, because he wanted to sell it, and move to a better and cheaper one, which was also furnished. I went and saw this apartment which was actually better being on the seventh floor with a big kitchen and a balcony where you could sit. The previous apartment had a very small balcony. So I decided to move and began to slowly carry my things on foot to the new apartment, because it was not far. Also, every day, I sprayed cockroach killer in the kitchen of the new apartment and the next day I collected the corpses of a dozen or so cockroaches. This lasted almost a month. I have never killed so many cockroaches in my life. I sold the electric stove and the refrigerator, which I had bought, at half their price, while the washing machine and a TV I had bought, I carried them in a van that the owner of the apartment I lived in found for me. So I found myself on the seventh floor on the Street of the Stars, as the street was called, where the apartment building was located.

Shortly before I moved, Sophia, who was in Greece, informed me that the tax bill had arrived and they were asking me to pay six times more tax than I had paid the previous year. And this happened because I declared myself a foreign resident, expecting a discount due to the rent I was paying abroad. Not only did they not give me such a discount, but they also canceled all the others discounts I had as a father of two children. I, of course, not only had no money to pay, but also owed two million drachmas to my mother, so I began to think about going back to Greece, even if

they put me in prison as an insubordinate. Nevertheless, I moved to the new apartment and lived there dreaming that the family would come to find me there too. But when one day the roller shutter of the balcony door unrolled and won't retract and this had the consequence not to be able to dispose off the garbage as well (having to throwing it into the central bin in the basement of the apartment building from a hole in the balcony), without having money to fix it, my patience ran out. I felt that the sacrifices I made to live in such a city were too many and since I also needed to save money to pay the tax, I decided to abandon the house and return to Greece. Which was so unpleasant to me that I felt like falling out of the bedroom balcony door into the void. That balcony door did not have a balcony, which was common in the complex of apartment buildings where I lived, but in Greece I had never seen this before.

Trying to absorb as much of Europe's beauty as I could before heading back in the piteous "Psorokostaina"

Before returning to Greece, I decided to do a few trips, knowing that once I returned to Greece, it would be incredibly difficult to do them. I decided to go to Switzerland, further away from Lugano, where I had already been. Also in Bergamo, where my conscientious objector friend Tasos Batas lived. Even in Treviso, where I would stay at Loris and Caterina's house for a few days, to go to Venice and see the major sights that I had not seen 19 years ago, when we had gone to Venice for the International Anarchist Meeting. And, finally, in Florence, to see the famous Uffizi museum, which had collected many works of famous Renaissance painters and sculptors. In the summer of 1996, when the whole family went to Florence with my aunt and her daughter, in order someone to see this museum, had to wait hours in line. It had such a long tail.

In Switzerland I got as far as Locarno, which is also in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland. For me, being in a Swiss city where Italian was spoken was particularly pleasant, because in a way I felt a comfort, as if I were in Italy. It was also particularly pleasant, because Locarno, which is built around a lake and surrounded by mountains, like Lugano, is a beautiful city. And it is not only the beauty of the city that makes it attractive. It is also the fact that everything in this city, as in Lugano and, I suppose, in all Swiss cities, is neat, clean and decorated with flowers wherever possible. You don't find ruins and places full of garbage there, like in the center of Athens. In Exarchia, in particular, where I lived all the time I stayed in Athens, there are a lot of ruins. And you can find trash at the door of every basement that is not inhabited. Also, flower pots in every window, like in Switzerland, are hard to find. The beauty, order and cleanliness that surround you from everywhere in the Swiss cities, make you feel that you come from the poor countries of Africa or Asia, when you come from Greece. So great is the distance that separates Switzerland from Greece,

a distance that you can see at first glance. And yet, as the writer Vikelas wrote in the 19th century, Greece because of its natural beauties could become Switzerland if it were in the right hands. But he himself realized from then on that such a thing would not happen, because Greece was then in bad hands. It still is, I would add.

In Treviso where I went, my friends Loris Zofoli and Katerina Spinela treated me in the best way. Although after 19 years since I had stayed in their house again, their relation had deteriorated, they really treated me like comrades. They showed me all over Treviso and served me every day an excellent Italian wine, Teroldego Rotaliano. And Treviso is also a very nice city that makes you see Athens as a city of a poor African or Asian country. In many places you can see canals with water and it even has remains of medieval walls, where we took our walks. When I once learned that it was a pornographic production center, I fell from the sky. But Switzerland also owes part of its wealth to the gold, valuables and money that the Nazis had seized from the Jews during World War II and had deposited in Swiss banks. It took long international legal battles to get some of it back to the descendants of the Jews exterminated by the Nazis. Also, until then, Swiss banks accepted deposits without looking at where the money came from, so money flowed into Switzerland from all the military dictatorships of the world, as well as international mafia activities. Even today there are ways that "black money" bypasses controls.

Venice becomes part of my life: My memories of the city that made me feel as close to it as to Lefkada

Anyway, I hadn't been to Treviso to see Treviso. I had gone to see Venice, if only for the last time. So I took the train from Treviso and after 15 minutes I was in Venice. This time I learned for the first time not to get lost in Venice and to take a road that took me from the train station to the central square of its largest island, St. Mark's Square. One day, in fact, to see four museums with one ticket, I walked for five hours until my feet blistered. On this day I visited the most important attraction, the Doge's Palace. Although it was not my first time entering a palace, I found it impressive, because most of its rooms were painted by top Renaissance painters and had furniture that was works of art. Walking through this palace I thought, for the first time, that it is foolishness to work a whole life to build or buy a house in Greece, when it will be nothing compared to the palace of the Doges. That is, life has much more value than a house, when this house is nothing in front of the Doge's palace. Of course, as a palace of the governors of Venice, it also had its infamous parts, such as the bridge that connects it to the old prisons of Venice, which is known as the Bridge of Sighs, because those who were led from it to the prisons, where the conditions were inhumane, sighed . Because of the humidity, the life of the prisoners in these prisons lasted months, as in the prisons of Akershus Castle, in Oslo.

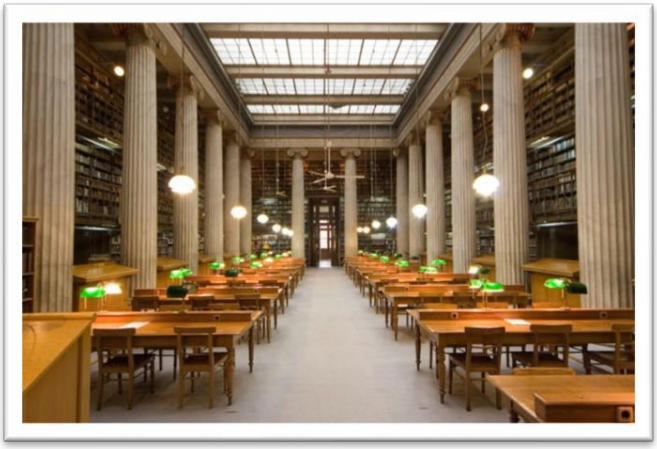
Another important attraction I visited was the Academy's art gallery. Many paintings by famous Italian Renaissance painters are gathered there, which impress you at least because of their size. You see paintings that reach three or four meters wide and others as long. Perhaps that is why the employees of this art gallery are not afraid of being robbed while the art gallery is open. I say this because, as I walked through the halls of the art gallery, alarms sounded every now and then, but I did not see the employees alarmed by them. And of course, it is not only the size that makes the paintings beautiful. And the representations are realistic, if a little beautified, and the colors are many and intense. Above all, Tintoretto's paintings are color feasts.

After the Academy I visited the Correr Gallery which is full of exhibits that show what Venice was like when it was in its glory. And this one is located near the Doge's Palace, in the huge square in front of the church of St. Mark. The visit to this church, on the same day, will remain unforgettable for me, not because of its beauty, since the icons inside are of the Byzantine style (although the outside is very beautiful), but because the Italian woman guard believed that I was Italian and asked me to get along with some tourists who didn't know Italian, because she didn't know any other language. The fact that I was so comfortable talking to her that she didn't realize I wasn't Italian made me feel proud. Proud not only of my Italian but because the guard of the most famous church in Venice, the church of St. Mark, which is also its cathedral, considered me "hers".

Another sight of Venice that will remain unforgettable for me, because there I felt like a local and not a foreigner, is its central library which is located directly opposite the Doge's Palace. I remember it by the name of its builder, Sansovino. It is a large and beautiful library from the outside, which I was lucky enough to get to know from the inside as well. I was given the opportunity to sit in its reading room, which is a large and very beautiful room, and read a few pages from a book on the subject of the Ionian Islands. It belonged to a certain Lunzi, a 19th century historian of the Ionian Islands.

The reading room of the Sansovian library in Venice, where I was lucky enough to sit and read a few pages from Lunzi's book

This opportunity was given to me because I had an Italian identity card. If I hadn't, they wouldn't give me any books, without special permission. An American woman professor, who tried to borrow a book while I was in the library's catalogs room, was unable to take it because she did not have an Italian ID. Because of this incident I once again felt Italian. This feeling was intensified by the fact that inside the library there were relatively few people and I felt comfortable. Right outside the library there were so many tourists it felt like you were at a demonstration. Another world, that is, as is the case with the National Library in Athens, at the Panepistimiou street. The central hall of the latter, which is impressive, has an extraordinary quietness and you feel very comfortable, while just outside the library the crowd and all kinds of vehicles, with the noise they make, make you feel that inside the library is another world.



The reading room of the National Library of Greece, on Panepistimiou street

One of the days I stayed in Treviso I came to Venice with Loris and Katerina. They showed me the square where 13 years ago the International Anarchist Meeting had taken place, during which we met, as well as the Jewish ghetto, whose inhabitants were exterminated in the concentration camps of Nazi Germany. We reached a large park, which is located on the central island of Venice next to the sea. On the shore in front of the park, a statue of a woman is resting, which is a monument to the resistance against the Nazis during the war. I think anti-fascists were executed at this point. When we arrived at the park the environment, I don't know why, reminded me of Lefkada. Maybe because in the park you don't see around you the old houses of Venice, which have made it famous, but a well-kept garden next to the sea, like in Lefkada, which has a park next to the sea, but not as big and nice. The impression of being in Lefkada made me feel even more familiar with this beautiful city. I felt that Venice was no longer a stranger to me and that is why I told my good friends and companions that I am not coming back again, because there are other interesting places to see before I die, such as the Paris. Little did I know then that another 13 years would pass before I would visit Paris for the first time, and perhaps the last time.

Before I left Treviso to return to Milan, Lloris showed me the storage room of his apartment, which was on the ground floor of the apartment building and was full of books, many of them about anarchy. He also had many books in his apartment, one room of which he had made into a library. There, the bookshelves reached up to the ceiling, so Loris used a ladder to reach the highest shelves. While in the warehouse, we got into a conversation about what would become of the books after the couple died, since they had no children. Loris told me they were going to the Venetian anarchist bookstore, Utopia. But when he saw me looking curiously at a book with the minutes of the trial and the apology of the famous anarchist of the 19th century Emile Henry, Lloris insisted on giving it to me. I reluctantly took it, promising to translate it and publish it in Greece. Before I did, however, many years passed and all this material on Emile Henry was translated and published by others. Anyway, leaving Treviso, I didn't know I wouldn't see this lovely couple again. I didn't keep in touch and I don't know now if they are alive or dead. A few years later I called them but no one picked up.

Alone in beautiful but extremely inhospitable Florence I run to see the oldest museum in Europe – With my conscientious objector friend to beautiful Bergamo

After Venice I visited Florence. This would be my third and last visit. In the previous two I had not had time to walk it and thus get to know it, as much as it is possible to get to know a city by walking a single day in its center. The reason I wanted to get to know, even just a little, this city was that it was famous for its importance in the development of European culture. It was one of the most important cities for challenging the dominance of the church and the feudal lords over all forms of social and economic life, as it manifested itself in the Middle Ages, and for the revival of interest in letters, arts and sciences, the which became known in history as the Renaissance. This challenge to the monopoly of the church and the landowners over all forms of social and economic life was based on the development of the class of merchants and stockbrokers, whose activities were based in the cities. One such city was Florence, as early as the 14th century AD, and became world-renowned for its men of letters, such as Dante Alighieri, Boccaccio and Petrarch (he was born in nearby Arezzo), its sculptors and painters, as well as its politicians such as Nicholas Machiavelli and the Medici. Even for its religious reformers, like Girolamo Savanarola. The Medici are also responsible for the collection of works of art, which was housed in one of their palaces that turned it into one of the first museums in the world. This is the Uffizi museum, which I did not want to leave Italy without seeing.

In order to go to Florence and return the same day to Milan, I needed to take a more expensive train than usual, because it covered long distances and ran fast. With that, after about two hours, I was in Florence, knowing that I would have a few hours ahead of me to see the museum. But, for some inexplicable reason, the museum that day would close at one in the afternoon, and I had reached it at half past twelve. So I was obliged to see the forty or so open rooms of the museum in half an hour. The time was so short that my running to see these forty rooms reminded me of a movie where some people were running as if they were chasing them, in order to see the Louvre museum in nine minutes! And as if it wasn't enough that, quite inexplicably, the museum closed so early that day, when I ended up in the museum shop and sought to purchase a museum book and videotape, the shop assistants refused to serve me, because the shop was also closing. On the contrary, some Japanese women who wanted the same as me, the saleswomen were prompt to serve them. Fortunately, I had practised my Italian, so long in Italy, and was able to assert my rights with a noisy way. Seeing that I would not leave the store without what I wanted, the saleswomen were forced to serve me.

The museum saleswomen were not the only rude residents of Florence. And with my aunt and my family, with whom I had visited Florence the last time before, we had a similar experience in a restaurant, where we sat down to eat and the employee wanted to place us next to the toilet. From these little details, combined with the fact that in this city you could find no public toilets, no public fountains, no benches to sit on, except for the bare minimum, I drew the perhaps superficial conclusion that the Florentines have a high opinion of themselves and that's why they look contemptuously at the not very rich tourists. But since I had come to Florence to see the city and not its inhabitants, I was not daunted, I walked for hours in the center of it and, when I needed to urinate, I went down by the river, to the Arno, and did my work, without let no one see me. I also had a nice view from my "outdoor toilet": The beautiful bridges over the river, such as the famous for its beauty Old Bridge (Ponte Vecchio).

The Old Bridge of Florence, which I could see from my "outdoor toilet"

As for, on the other hand, the river, the Arno, which in 1966 flooded and caused, in addition to dozens of victims, great damage to the artistic treasures of Florence, that day it had so little water that it made you wonder how it had done so much destruction in the past.

Unfortunately, while I was in Florence, I couldn't afford to visit any other museums, and I also had the misfortune of finding closed the city's cathedral, which was the tallest building apart from the tower next to the Uffizi museum, from where the city was governed by its lords during the Middle Ages. It was as if the authorities were deliberately closing the most important attractions of Florence to the public, to show their contempt for tourists. With these and with those, I left Florence that afternoon, not having any desire to see it again in my life.

I think the last trip, before returning to Greece, I made to Bergamo. The reason I went there was because my friend Batas lived there and not because I had heard

words of praise for the city. And yet this city turned out to be extremely beautiful and worthy of being visited by anyone. In order to walk through it I wanted Tasos Batas with me, and that's why, as soon as I arrived at the train station in Bergamo, I called him. But for an hour he didn't pick up the phone and that's why I ended up alone, taking a cable car, to the upper part of the city which has the most attractions. Fortunately, from there I called Tasos again and we met. This city will remain unforgettable to me for two reasons: Firstly, because some of its rulers, at the time when it was a city-state, belonged to the Colleoni family, whose name spelled differently in Italian, means testicles, and secondly, because its central square was a large square in front of its beautiful public library. I've always been a big fan of books, and seeing that a city had a library at its center made me appreciate it a lot.

Touring the Milan of the dead: St. Bernardino and the Memorial Cemetery

Returning to Milan, I started preparing to rent out the house and return to Greece. Before leaving Milan, I thought it necessary to visit a few more of its most important sights, for I suspected I would not see it again. So I visited a small church, near the center, St. Bernardino, in a small hall of which, in front of each wall, were placed, on shelves that covered the whole wall, skulls. There were thousands of skulls and it made one wonder where they came from.

One of the walls of the special hall of the church, which are covered with skulls from top to bottom

Translated from Greek to English - www.onlinedoctranslator.com

As I read in a pamphlet I found, experts suspected that they had been collected from some cemetery that was filled with victims of plagues, such as the plague that had spread through the city several times in the Middle Ages and later, and had claimed many lives.

Looking at the skulls, I thought of a similar church with skulls in Czechoslovakia (then Czechoslovakia had not yet been divided into Czechia and Slovakia). However, I can't say I felt any awe. Although the fear of death has during my life been quite intense for me, the sight of skulls was to me as foreign to my inner world as the sight of boxes in an ossuary. Perhaps in such cases reality is presented before us free of imagination and therefore so prosaic that it cannot impress us.

Another Milan sight was also connected with death, which I visited before I left Milan. This was the "Monumental Cemetery", i.e. the cemetery where Milan's aristocracy and plutocracy are buried, so it was full of impressive monuments. Of this, a part of it, near the entrance, where the graves were one on top of the other, like a block of flats, of which one could only see the facade, made a greater impression on me than the monuments. A facade divided into squares, in each of which the name of the deceased was written and there was also a place for some flowers. And I was even more impressed by the old crematorium of the cemetery, where, on the wall high above the ovens for burning the corpses, was written in Latin "Dust you are, and dust you will become". I had never seen a crematorium in my life and, since then, I haven't. I had only seen crematoria from Nazi extermination camps in photographs.

At the "Scala of Milan" on the days of the tribute to Maria Kalas, watching one of the world's greatest dancers rehearse: Mikhail Baryshnikov

I couldn't leave Milan without visiting its famous opera theater, known in Italian as "Teatro alla Scala" and in Greece as "Milan's Staircase". Unfortunately, I never found the money to go see a performance in it, but I did find enough money to send Sophia and my daughter Kristiana. There they had watched, when my aunt had come and paid for them, an adaptation of Fellini's “La strada” and, after my aunt had left, Gershwin's “Porgy and Bess”. When I had sent Sophia and Kristiana, I did not know that after a little while I would be leaving Milan for good, and therefore I hoped that I had time before me to attend some show myself, when I would be able to save some money. At least I managed to visit the premises of this opera house, which they use as a museum. There I saw various personal belongings of the most famous opera composer, many of whose operas were staged in this theater, Giuseppe Verdi. And the most important thing: In those days the museum had a tribute to the most

famous Greek soprano, who had sung many times in this theater, Maria Kalas, who had died twenty years earlier. I did not fail to buy the museum material related to her. Finally, I was able to see what the theater is like from the inside, from one of its galleries. In fact, I had the great fortune to see one of the most famous dancers in the world, Baryshnikov, rehearsing on the stage of the theater. He had come to Milan for a couple of shows. My joy at having, by sheer luck, "stumbled upon" the tribute to Kalas and Baryshnikov's rehearsals was such that, when I left the theater, I took a tram to go home, though I knew that in the tram the ticket checks were often. Due to "happiness" I forgot the danger for the moment. Result: Inspectors boarded the tram and caught me without a ticket. For about a year and a half I was moving around in Milan and they hadn't caught me. And because of Kalas I got caught. I apologized to them that I had a ticket but forgot to punch it. I didn't escape the fine, of course, but I needed some justification. Luckily, I had an Italian ID so they gave me a paper with the amount and told me that the paper to pay for it would come to the address I gave them. It was 12,000 Italian liras, eight times the ticket which was 1500 liras. While I stayed in Italy no paper came but I, to avoid future trouble at the border, left money to my comrade conscientious objector Giuseppe Marazzi to pay for it, when the paper would go to the address of the Italian Association of Conscientious Objectors, given that this address I gave to the ticket inspectors. When, after a long time, I called Giuseppe from Lefkada, no paper had gone yet. I never found out what happened to the fine.

Leaving the city that sealed my life and the life of my daughter: The goodbye kiss from the "mobster"

Before I left Milan, I decided not to leave behind any pending accounts of the apartment, so that the representative of the landlady and in the same time owner of the previous apartment I rented would not say that I did not treat him like a "gentleman", as he had treated me. I didn't want to leave a bad impression on the landlady either so that she could say that foreigners are not reliable tenants. Although I had not met this owner, I felt some sympathy for her, for in her apartment where I was staying, she had left her library of a number of small cloth-bound books with classic Italian literary works and even her school books, from the time she was in high school during the 1950s. I had seen some excellent films set in Milan at that time, such as the famous "Miracle in Milan" by Vittorio De Sica and "Rocco and his brothers" by Luchino Visconti, and I had developed a certain respect for the people of that difficult post-war era, to the extent that I did not feel like treating them like "deadbeat". My experiences with the Milanese up until then had been so positive that if I left bills unpaid, I would feel like a traitor to the trust they had placed in me, and

ungrateful for the welcome they had reserved for me and my family. Even an application for a house with a very low rent, which the Municipality of Milan would grant me, they had accepted from me because I was unemployed and, if I had stayed there, they would have given it to me, as I found out from a letter from the competent department of the Municipality, which was sent to me after I had already left, and was sent to me by Ferrara, the landlady's representative. Unfortunately, no matter what I did, Ferrara finally decided to let me down, saying in the letter he sent me along with the letter from the City of Milan, that I had left the gas unpaid, which was not true. And yet, I had treated him in such a good way, that I even left him my color television, which he took to give as charity to some who needed it. I also left the washing machine in the apartment, which, although it was a furnished apartment, did not have a washing machine, while I could sell it, as I had done in the past with the electric stove and the refrigerator I had in the previous house. And he, to show me his appreciation, when I was leaving my house for good, took me in his car to the Metro station and kissed me goodbye!

Waiting for the train to Ancona in Milan Central Station, I was thinking that I had accomplished yet another great feat. Not only had I managed to live in Milan decently but my family had also managed to live. Somehow, albeit for a much shorter period of time than I had wished, I had achieved my dream of living abroad. And in fact I had lived in a European metropolis, which had nothing to envy from the well-known European capitals, in terms of its European cultural characteristics, such as the architecture of the buildings of its historic center. I could say that if the time I spent in Milan had been spent in Rome, I would not have felt that I lived in Western Europe but in Southern Europe, no matter how beautiful Rome is, because of its artistic treasures and its long history her history. This history has justifiably made it known as the "eternal city". Even for the Romans of the 1950s, Milan was the North, like Germany, where one went to work, since in his homeland, in the South, there were no prospects to improve his life.

Crash landing in the sad Greek reality: Three Greek ships that were supposed to sail and none sailed – The credit card that saved me – The return to Greece and the end of my military obligation

A great surprise awaited me at Ancona which, knowing how untrustworthy the Greeks are, should not have been a surprise to me: Of the two or three ships that were supposed to leave Ancona for Patras that day, none would leave! And I, as usual, had no money for a hotel. I didn't know what to do and, leaving my luggage at the train station, I walked along the beach admiring a fortress there, and in general the beauty of the buildings of the city. Until I thought I'd try using my credit card. And indeed the hotel across the street from the train station accepted cards and so, I found myself in a room with a double bed and a TV, which I liked so much that I lay in bed and only got up the next morning in order to leave the hotel and take the return boat.

On the boat, to avoid spending the night on foot, I booked the cheapest berth. Fortunately in the cabin, where I had booked a berth, although it had four berths, I was alone and therefore comfortable. But even though it was winter, I spent several hours of the trip walking around on the deck, listening to my walkman and looking out to sea. I preferred this to sitting in the ship's saloon for the third seat, or anyway the seat I was traveling in, and "suffering" the uncouth truck drivers who usually make up the majority of ferry travelers who do the voyage Italy-Greece during the winter months. The arrogance and the way these people talk makes you feel like they see you as trash, since you're not one of them and you're traveling by boat and not by plane. I didn't take a plane because, back then, planes were expensive, and, carrying luggage with me, I would have to pay extra on the plane. I was carrying a lot of books and books are very heavy compared to clothes. Anyway, sometime we reached Patras and from there I went to Lefkada, where my family was, by the regular bus coming from Athens. It was the winter of 1998. Twelve whole years would pass before I managed to get out of Greece again.

Before I returned to Greece, I had built up a debt of three million drachmas, two of which I owed to my mother and the third to the tax office and the credit card. Although it seemed incredible to find a way to pay off my debt, after a while I had managed to sort it out. This made me not regret my stay in Italy, where, after all, I had taken refuge, because I had been wronged by the Council of the State, and I had found myself at the mercy of the army, if they wanted to arrest me. However, the fact that the tax office had taxed me with 500% more tax than the previous year, because I declared being resident abroad, had made me furious against this predatory institution, which has so many traps in store for taxpayers, that you don't

know how to protect yourself. I, because of the tax office, had been forced to go back to this hell called Greece and to be, for the next three years, at the mercy of the army if they wanted to arrest me. I needed to turn forty-five years old in order to no longer have a military obligation, while the regime of general conscription, which made the position of the insubordinates particularly unfavorable, was abolished just four years later (2002), i.e. it lasted a whole 28 years!

FINAL RETURN TO GREECE – TAE KVON DO AND THE FOUNDING OF THE ANTI-NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

The Greece I lived in during my return: Loneliness and economic suffocation to the extent of having a stroke

Returning to Greece, sometime I went from Lefkada to Athens, to see my mother whom I had not seen for a long time. It happened, when I was at my mother's house, that my brother passed by, and we quarreled as much as never after that quarrel. We fought because I questioned whether mental illness is a real illness that can be diagnosed with tests, like the others, and accused psychiatrists of being agents of repression, like the police. My brother probably felt that he was personally offended because he specialized in psychiatry and cursed me badly. My mother, seeing the fight, started crying and I, to avoid worse, had to leave my mother's house badly. When I came back to Lefkada, I felt very bad psychologically, because from the financial point of view I was also miserable and I also felt very alone, since my brother had treated me in this way, while Sophia was only concerned with the children and her relationship with me was only cohabitation relationship.

I don't know if my mental state played a role but less than a month after I returned from Italy I started suffering from headaches and nausea that lasted for months. When they were also accompanied by some mistakes in the pronunciation of words, such as the word Athens which I pronounced without wanting to Athana, and from an inability to focus on an object with my vision, I began to fear that I had a brain tumor. Having watched my mother-in-law die from such a tumor, unable to do anything, I did not feel the mental strength to go to a doctor and learn, even indirectly, that I had the same disease. It never crossed my mind for a moment that I might have had a small stroke. So I spent some months in such a bad psychological state that I resumed smoking, which I had stopped when Sophia had also stopped, because she had become pregnant with Kristiana. I had quit for eight years, but I smoked four or five cigarettes a year, and the consequence was that I had not completely got rid of the addiction, as I found when I quit again ten years later, which, because I never smoked a cigarette again, I still have it cut since then.

My son cracks his skull falling down the railingless stairs

To combat the fear of illness and death, at that time, in addition to resuming smoking, I also engaged in house maintenance. I also tried taking sedatives, which I had taken in the past to combat my hypochondria, but I saw no light and did not continue. Although the fear had come to affect my subconscious as well, as it appears in dreams.

I had such a dream one night. I dreamed that I had gone to a doctor, who had done a CT scan and found that I had a brain tumor. Fortunately, I didn't actually get a CT scan at that time or later. It was only a dream. It took, however, the day that dawned after the dream, for my four-year-old son to do. And this, because while playing with his sister on the stairs, which led from the door of our apartment to the terrace, because I had not found money to put bars on the stairs, he fell from the stairs, from the height of the terrace door, in front of the door of our apartment and hit his head on the concrete step in front of our door. I shall never forget the horror I felt when I heard the fall and saw him sob bitterly. Sophia, as she usually does, held me responsible for the accident, because I did not look after the children, which I could not have done, because when they went up the stairs to play, I had gone for a bicycle ride, to combat my hypochondria . Nevertheless, she acted cool, telling me to take him to the hospital. And since I didn't have a car, nor did I know anyone with a car, and we didn't want to be looking for a taxi while our son was tearing up the world from crying, I took him, as it were, in his socks, on my lap, and through the central road of Lefkada we took him to the hospital. There they brought in the radiologist from his home and took an x-ray of his head, where he found a small crack in his forehead. By the time the radiologist came and took the x-ray, my son had stopped crying and Sophia, seeing that he could walk without losing his balance, thought that his brain was not damaged and so we could go back home. However, due to the crack, they advised us to take him by ambulance to the university hospital of Ioannina, where there was a neurosurgeon. So it happened and Sophia accompanied him to the ambulance.

The whole family spends the night by the side of the little one at the university hospital of Ioannina

I didn't want to leave Sophia alone with the little one and I decided to go to Ioannina with Kristiana. But unfortunately, I happened to not have money at all and I couldn't even get money from the bank, where I had very little, because its employees were on strike for about two months and the ATMs didn’t function. Fortunately, at that difficult moment, Thanasis, Sophia's cousin's husband who lived in the apartment building next to us, lent me the necessary money. With it we took a taxi to Ioannina.

All the way I was thinking that if my son died, I wouldn't even have money for the funeral. Fortunately, when we arrived in Ioannina, I caught up with the neurosurgeon who examined him and he told us not to worry, because due to his age the bones in my son's head were quite elastic and, barring the unexpected, nothing would have happened to my son. Nevertheless, he admitted him to the hospital, until the time he was to have a CT scan.

That night the whole family spent the night next to the bed of George, my son, who, although we were not alone in the ward (next to my son was another child who had badly injured his face falling from his bicycle), considered the room a hotel room and recommended to rent it! He was still only about three and a half years old and had no idea where we were. Fortunately, we didn't have to stay long in that ward, because the day after they sent him to another hospital, where he had a CT scan and nothing was found. After that and after I read the results of the CT scan, the doctor in charge discharged him and we returned to Lefkada. Before returning to Lefkada I called my mother and she sent me some money. That phone call must have been quite emotional, because someone listening gave me a thousand drachmas banknote for my son, which he has kept as a keepsake ever since. It's amazing how someone you don't know can support you in such difficult times. Also, it is impressive how someone can take advantage of you, when they realize that you are in a difficult time. This is how a taxi driver from Preveza took advantage of us, as we were returning to Lefkada, taking a bus from Ioannina to Preveza, to go from there to Lefkada. Since the bus from Preveza to Lefkada would take several hours, we thought of taking a taxi. The taxi driver, seeing me holding the child in my arms and learning that we were returning from a hospital, asked us an exorbitant amount of money for Lefkada, refusing to start the taxi meter. In fact, in agreement with the other taxi drivers in his square, when we went and asked them how much they wanted for Lefkada, they told us what he was asking for. So we were forced and succumbed to his absurd demands.

Return to Lefkada, peak and end of the symptoms that fueled my fear of death

In Lefkada, when we returned, my head problems continued and increased. Already in Ioannina I had noticed that I had a problem walking, as if I was not controlling my legs enough, when I had gone to a bank to collect the amount my mother had sent me. In Lefkada I found that I could not walk perfectly straight. I also found, reading Aziz Nesin's autobiography to cheer me up, that I skipped words as I read, so I kept coming back at the beginning of each sentence to re-read it in order to make sense. There were still other things I wanted to say and others came out of

my mouth, with the result that I made mistakes in pronouncing the words. This last symptom had me very worried, because my mother-in-law's problem had started with difficulty in her speech. And when something was falling out of my hands, I kept remembering my mother-in-law who, because of the tumor in her head, suffered the same. All of this had me giving myself a fifty-fifty chance of having a brain tumor. And the only measure I was taking was "occupational therapy". As part of my "occupational therapy" I also painted the iron railings of the balconies, as well as an iron staircase. But this job didn't go smoothly for me either. I remember that as I was painting the railings I was dizzy, and as a result my fears grew more and more. Fortunately, throughout my problems, Sophia gave me courage by telling me similar experiences, as much as possible, and also her cousin Giorgia, who had helped me when Sophia's brother had rent his shop for a bar with "consumption". This young woman knew how to give me so much optimism that every time we talked about my problems, she managed to make fun of them. For example, when I showed her my hands that were shaking, she showed me hers that were shaking more, while when I told her that I was mispronouncing the words, she told me that her husband, Thanasis, did the same. . I was lucky that we had her and her family as friends by that time. Unfortunately this friendship did not last forever and the time came when we were just neighbors.

The problems with my head passed without me realizing it, when Nikos came to Lefkada, an uncle of the husband of Giorgia's little sister who was also Sophia's cousin. He was a retired sailor and also painted as an oil painter to supplement his pension. He had come to Lefkada to paint some apartments of Sophia's relatives and I also seized the opportunity to tell him to paint some of our rooms as well. After all, it wasn't the first time he painted for us. He had painted in the past and always let me choose the amount of the fee. He was a very nice person and whenever he came to Lefkada, we hung out. When, after the relatives' apartments, he came to paint in ours, while he painted I watched him and we talked and, as if by a miracle, the various problems I had with my head were overcome and forgotten. So that summer passed without a hitch. Much later I thought that the adventure I had had with my head could have been a small stroke. At the time this had not occurred to me at all. Anyway, the period when I had problems with my head was one of the worst of my life, because it was not only the symptoms that bothered me but also my great fear of cancer. This fear, which was overcome in the summer, reappeared in the fall.

In the fall, in particular, I started having breathing problems, which continued through the winter. If one thinks that we were warmed by a wood stove and me and Sophia were smoking cigarettes, in such a small house, in a city, as in Lefkada, which is famous for its humidity, he would consider such problems a natural consequence

of our unhealthy environment. Besides, I could have avoided them if I had used the Aerolin spray. Not only did I not use this spray, because I did not know its soothing properties, not only did I not go to any doctor to help me, but I also began to fear that I had lung cancer, i.e. the disease from which he had died my father. These problems tormented me physically and mentally until the end of the following spring, when I decided to have a check-up in Athens, thinking that I won't have cancer, because if I had so many months and I hadn't done anything about it, my condition would have worsened. Something that hadn't happened. So, in the late spring of 1999, at the age of 43 I had my first check-up. And while nothing was found in my lungs, there was a new reason to worry. I had a tiny bit of hematuria, which was hereditary and nothing to worry about, but I was again gripped by fears, this time about my kidneys.

Lazaros Petromelidis refuses to serve the despicable alternative term that they ask him and he is taken to prison

Before continuing the narrative of the adventures I had with my health, insignificant if one considers that I was going through 44th year of my life, I want to return to my political activities, because they were not political in the sense that politicians give to politics, but deeply humanitarian, since their goal was a world without lies and violence, where every person would be free to utilize his abilities and develop others. Especially on the question of violence, one of the most reliable positions against it is held by conscientious objectors, who consider the violence of war to be an evil that is not justified by good intentions. Even the argument that a war is good, because it is defensive, is not accepted by them, because they do not consider that, in fact, one defends himself when he makes war. And history has vindicated them and continues to vindicate them. Of course, when we say war, we mean the confrontation of armed men, who have been armed for this purpose, i.e. to confront other armed men, not the so- called social war, where one is involved, whether he wants it or not, in order to survive. Immigrants in Greece are involved in the war waged against them by racists and nationalists whether they like it or not. However, they have not been armed to confront other armed men. Even when they use weapons, they do so in order to save their lives, such as when they defend themselves against someone who is shooting at them either because he is racist or nationalist, in uniform or without uniform. We cannot blame them because e.g. they wrest the knife from a nationalist who wants to stab them and turn it on him, when he, taking advantage of his bulk and his training to beat, attempts to kill them by beating them.

Coming back to the conscientious objections I mentioned earlier, I want to remind you of Lazaros Petromelidis, who I mentioned above, talking about the good guys I met in the Association of Conscientious Objections. This sufferer, after the passing of the Conscientious Objection Act in 1997, applied to serve alternative social service.

The army, in order to make this term prohibitive for him, asked him to serve in Kilkis, about 550 kilometers from his residence, and in fact 30 months, instead of 4 that he would have served if he had done military service and not all these months together but a month every year.

Lazarus considered unconstitutional the provisions of the law applied to his case and therefore appealed to the Council of the State. When these events were happening, I had found Lazarus at the Association's offices, where I used to pass by every time I went down to Athens. It must have been the winter of 1999. Then I also met Glarnetatzis, a conscientious objector from Thessaloniki, who together with others had, in the past, produced the ecological and pacifist magazine "Arnoumai" (I refuse). I quarreled with this last one from the first day I met him, because he called Petromelidis a moron, since he did not want to serve the alternative term in Kilkis. And yet Petromelidis and he had the best relations until then and would have them in the future. Every time Petromelidis went to Thessaloniki, Glarnetatzis hosted him. Fortunately, at least, Petromelidis was not persuaded by Glarnetatzis to serve and thus justify the objectionable 1997 law. However, he did not refrain from seeking again the recognition of his human right to conscientious objection by the army, appearing in court (Naval Court) (where he was tried because, due to the non-completion of the alternative term, he had been considrered insubordinate again), in April 1999. I, before he appeared, had warned him that the court was not going to vindicate him, but he persisted, considering that this is how he should defend himself politically as conscientious objector. The consequence of his presentation was that he was sentenced to four years in prison for disobedience during general conscription (25 years after its declaration, it was still going on!) and sent to prison.

Old conscientious objectors refuse to serve unacceptable alternative term – The Association of C.O.s proves unable to mobilize for Lazaros Petromelidis

After Lazarus was imprisoned there was a meeting of the Association to see what we could do for him. In this assembly, I and another objector, Krontiras, supported the total objection to conscription, because we did not consider ourselves bound to any service when we refused to serve in the army. The rest, however, continued to defend the alternative term, but without accepting to serve, as defined by the law and without any hope that this law would change in the near future. In vain we asked them to refuse the military service in general, since no other type of alternative service was going to be established in Greece. On the other hand, Petromelidis who had followed their example, i.e. he accepted the alternative service in general but not the one in force, was in prison. Their guilt led them to agree among themselves that they too would not serve any alternative term while Lazarus was in prison, even if they too fell from the status of objector, as Lazarus had fallen. I didn't think they had the guts for such a thing, but I was finally disproved. Perhaps, because the term they would have to serve, those who attempted it, found it difficult to bear.

Glarnetatzis left the post after two or three days, leaving Lechaina, where he was serving and Chrysovergis served an alternative term, as long as he would serve in the military, i.e. six months. And after the release of Lazarus, after two and a half months, neither one nor the other sought to regain the status of conscientious objector and continue their terms.

Apart from that, we didn't manage to do anything more for Lazarus, like a rally or a demonstration, while he was in prison. In some of the weekly meetings of the Association, which were still held and I also went whenever I was in Athens, the topic of making a mobilization for Lazarus by producing a text before, came up. Unfortunately, those present at this meeting were in a hurry to leave before our work was completed, and in the end we were left to discuss about Lazarus only myself, his wife and his sister who had come to the meeting to push us to do something about him. It was then that I learned that his wife had studied in Italy, at the time that Sophia and I had stayed in Perugia, and she had probably also heard something about us. This fact, together with my genuine interest in Lazarus, resulted in us maintaining some telephone contact for some time, even after Lazarus was released from prison. However, I was reunited with Lazarus several times, as we will see below, while with his wife, unfortunately, I was never reunited, although we were connected by our appreciation for Italian culture. However, like his wife, Lazarus also appreciated my interest in him while he was in prison, an interest that was also expressed in a multi-page letter that I sent him in prison to boost his morale. That, after his release, he always treated me as a friend and not simply a fellow conscientious objector, I attribute to this appreciation of the support I showed him.

I remain alone in justifying the NATO intervention to end the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo

Another thing that made me different from my other colleagues in the Association was my position towards the war in the former Yugoslavia. In 1999, this war was being fought in Kosovo, which had not yet gained its independence. In order to avoid Kosovo to be ethnically cleansed by the Kosovar Albanians, who were also the large majority, NATO had intervened and bombed military and similar installations of the Serbs, as well as state stations that propagated ethnic cleansing. All the other objectors condemned the bombings as an intervention in the internal affairs of Yugoslavia, while I did not, because I likened them to the Allied military intervention against Nazi Germany in World War II. And although the Greek opposition, as well as the Greek mass media, protested the bombing of Serbian targets, as did all Greek parliamentary or extra-parliamentary parties, the majority of public opinion in Europe and America was in favor of them. And rightfully so, because with them the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo of its Albanian inhabitants was stopped and the architect

of the war in the former Yugoslavia, president Slobodan Milosevic, also fell. NATO did not allow the Serbs to repeat in Kosovo, what they had done in Srebrenica in 1995. One genocide was enough. It did not let the Albanians suffer from the Serbs what the Bosnians had suffered. And yet, in Greece at the time, all parties, even the anti-authoritarians, were protesting the NATO air intervention against Serbia and not the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo. Fortunately, I, as usual, did not get carried away by the crowd. Although I were a Balkanian, and for this reason according to Chrysovergis' opinion which had been expressed at the association's assembly for Lazarus, I should condemn NATO!

New adventures with my health - The arrival of the new millennium and the futurist's unfulfilled prophecies about substantial changes, bad or good, in the new millennium

To return, now, to my new health fears which could easily be diagnosed as hypochondria, these fears lasted until the winter, when I ended up having a cystoscopy at the public hospital in Preveza and nothing was found. From that story, what I remember most, apart from the doctor who did it to me, who badmouthed me because he was a chore for him, is that with the urologist, who had made the referral, we did a whole procedure so that I wouldn't have to be hospitalized for a day in the hospital, as was customary in such cases. This is because I have always been uninsured and would have to pay for my hospital stay, without having any money. Fortunately, the urologist, unlike the director of the urology clinic who performed my cystoscopy, was very nice to me as a person. Finally, from this story, I also remember that because I wanted to go back from Preveza to Lefkada and there was no bus until many hours later, I decided to go back via Vonitsa, i.e. taking a bus to Vonitsa and from there to Lefkada. Since I also had to wait in Vonitsa, I seized the opportunity to visit its castle, which I had not visited until then and neither I never visited again. And yet it is a well-preserved and important castle, for it was the seat of the Venetian admiral Francis Morosini, who wrested Lefkada from the Ottoman Empire in 1684 and also Athens from the same empire, having previously destroyed the Parthenon with his cannonades. He had also succeeded in seizing the Peloponnese and for this he was honored by the Venetians with the nickname "Peloponnesian".

With such concerns, because I had not yet had the cystoscopy, the year 2000 found me, when, according to the calendar prevailing in most parts of the world, we were changing millenniums and going from the second to the third. At the time when the time was changing, some festive events were taking place in the central square of Lefkada and, in order to feel the change of the millennium, we went with Sophia to the square. We didn't sit at all because the weather was very cold and at the turn of the millennium I think it was hailing. The change of the millennium did

not impress me, because the collective dreams, which I had also appropriated, for a better world, which would be ensured for us by the progress of science, had obviously remained just dreams. The world around me differed little from the world as I had known it as a child, and if science had worked miracles, it had done them for a small minority of the planet and not for the great majority. At least the Lefkada of 2000 was a little different from the Lefkada of 1981 that I had known and for many Lefkadians the developments in science were nothing more than a journalistic matter. Even the pessimism about the future, as emanated from futurist writers like Huxley, Orwell, Zamyatin, Clark and Asimov, had proved too much. The world had become neither better nor worse. The changes were small and quantitative rather than qualitative. I too had reached 44 years of life, without feeling either old, as I thought when I was young that I would feel when I reached 44, nor that I had already lived my life. Instead, I still made plans for the future, some of which, in the future, came true.

Reading as an obligation to myself, in order to justify the choices I had made in the past

One of my dreams of the last millennium was to get a black belt in Karate. That dream may not have come true, but I did get a black belt in martial arts in the new millennium. That martial art was Tae Kwon Do, a martial art that has so much in common with Karate that it could be seen as a Korean version of Karate. Before proceeding with my re-engagement with martial arts, I would like to write a little about an occupation that in Lefkada helped me to escape from the daily boredom of a provincial town and to travel with my mind to more interesting worlds. That occupation was reading. I could say I owed it to myself to read some books, because I didn't regret for buying them and I hadn't bought them so that I would never read them, although the books I bought and have not yet managed to read are many. In short, I felt obliged to read the books I had bought, so as not to blame myself for having thrown away my money. So, in principle, I started and read the books that I had brought with me from my first trip to England, with the intention of translating them and publishing them in Greece. I would consider it a personal failure that I had paid so much money for these, important books, and I had not even managed to read them. So since 1998 when I had returned to Greece, I read these books. Also, already from the 1970s, I still had unread some scientific books on Geography, History and Biological sciences that I had ordered and had been sent to me from England. And these books I obliged myself to read, if not all, at least most of them. And the books I read, most of them (at least the scientific ones) I donated to the Lefkada Public Library. In the library, the director, Maria Roussou, had finished Panteio, like me, and we were about the same age, so she knew my political history and showed me some respect. So the books I donated to this library were well

received and, over the years, I managed to donate over two hundred books that I had read. If this library didn't accept my books, there would be no room in my house to bring in new ones. We were so cramped. Although many books I have bought since then I will never find time to read, I believe they are so worthy that my children will appreciate them and not consider them a mere whim when I am dead. And one last thing about the library above: Maria Roussou, as a reward for my donation to the library, gave me the book about the castle of Lefkada (also known as the castle of Agia Mavra), which was published at the library's expense.

Besides English books, at that time I also started listening to English books on cassette tapes. This helped me a lot in understanding, later on, the English I heard on TV or on the Internet. I could say that I not only listened to these books on tape but enjoyed them. And this is because a foreign language, if one knows how to speak it correctly, has its own beauty when you hear it, which you don't enjoy when you read it. First of all, in the speech you can distinguish the emotion that you don't distinguish when you just read. Then you have to imagine it. Emotion makes a text more attractive. On the other hand, when you hear the words, you also learn their correct pronunciation, which, when you read them, you simply imagine and even, sometimes, incorrectly. Even the voice you hear adds beauty to a text, because a nice voice (and those who read books always have a clear voice and nice, otherwise they wouldn't read) is worth listening to on its own, as long as it doesn't say nonsense . But the books we choose cannot be nonsense for us.

The Lefkada militants and writers, whom I met personally: People who appreciated my struggles

Two other things I want to write about the books I read in Lefkada: Being in Lefkada, I also started reading books about Lefkada, because surely a book about a familiar place that you like is more interesting than a book for a foreign place And Lefkada, as I have written above, I really liked it. Among these books was the "History of the National Resistance in Lefkada", of which I had the good fortune to personally meet the author, Zois Koutsautis, whom I mentioned above. Zois was head of the K.K.E. (Communist Party o Greece) in Lefkada, during the German occupation and after the war he spent many years in prison, had been tortured and became blind. Although blind, he was prolific writer during his lifetime. He happened to marry a neighbor and friend of Sophia's mother, who had also known Sophia since she was a child, and that's how his wife introduced him to us. His wife, during the civil war 1946-1949, had lost her brother in battle, who was then 17 years old. For me, although he had the reputation of a hard Stalinist, it was an

honor this couple to visit us at our home in Lefkada. Also an honour for me was that the blind historian of the national resistance of Lefkada gave me his last book with a dedication. It was an honor for me, because Zois Koutsautis knew my political history and, of course, my ideological affiliation, and yet he considered me a fighter and not a chauvinist or petty bourgeois, as communists usually consider Trotskyists and anarchists. And to be recognized as a militant by a militant with such a history is very important, regardless of whether he, if he had come to power, would have exterminated you, as the Stalinist communists always did with the Trotskyists and the anarchists. As important for me was the opinion of the post-dictatorship Revolutionary People's Struggle, which recognized me in 1979 as a militant, even though it knew that I was and am an anarchist and not a communist.

Another communist intellectual, who had also been tortured in the concentration camp of Makronissos because of his political affiliation, had dedicated his book about the old houses of Lefkada to me and Sophia: The notary Dimos Malakasis, who had also drawn up the contracts for our house in Lefkada. He, together with the author of the "History of the Island of Lefkada" and founder of the Lefkada Public Library, Panos Rontogiannis, and the most famous folklorist of Lefkada, Pantazis Kontomichis, had studied the documents of the historical archive of Lefkada and had highlighted many elements from the its history and its culture.

Panos Rontogiannis died shortly after we moved to Lefkada (he died in 1996) and I never saw him, but Pantazis Kontomichis was alive. And although I didn't meet him personally, and only heard him speak at an event in his honor, I met his son Tasos, who also gave me a folklore book about the toponyms of Lefkada. I met Tasos as a librarian at the Special Lefkada Library founded by Telis Haramoglis, who dedicated to it his large collection of books related to Lefkada. Charamoglis had once, at the suggestion of Tasia, the wife of Zois Koutsautis, called me and asked me for my book "To Treloharto" for his library. But I told him that it had nothing to do with Lefkada and I did not give it to him, because I had forgotten that in this book I also refer to Lefkada. And him, I once at the office of the Special Lefkada Library, where he was talking to a couple, but I did not introduce myself to him. On the contrary, with Tasos, who was then working in this library, I spoke many times and found that we were ideologically in agreement. But Tasos was very low-key and I didn't see him anywhere but the library. Thanks to him I secured a photocopy of the autobiographical book "A flower grows in the swamp" by Zois Koutsautis, which had been out of print for a long time and I had read it in the National Library, at the Panepistimiou street.

Resuming Martial Arts Training – Tae Kwon Do and My Term as president of the Lefkada Tae Kwon Do Sports Club

As I said above, I may not have gotten a black belt in Karate, but I did in Tae Kwon

Do. My involvement with Tae Kwon Do came about when, at Sophia's suggestion, I went to the municipal gym of Lefkada, where the Tae Kwon Do classes were held, to enroll my daughter and my son in them. The Tae Kwon Do teacher, when he found out that I had a blue belt in Karate, suggested that I take lessons too, which I was not at a loss to try. For me, the only reason that would keep me away from the gym would be that the vagrants and fascists gather there and the environment resembles a camp environment. But I was lucky because, not only were vagrants and fascists not gathering there, but the teacher was extremely calm and soft-spoken. He never got angry and never cursed and never let students get bullied by other students. When he needed to pit us against each other, he made sure to make pairs of more or less equal opponents. If he saw that someone could become dangerous to others, he would take it upon himself to make a pair with him. Also, if he wanted to make a new one not come again, he made the lesson so strenuous that the new one did not come again after two or three times, after working his fingers to the ground from the hard exercise. I can't say, however, that he had absolute control of the place, because he was afraid to accept Albanians in the lessons with the excuse that an Albanian who used to be a student, had been beaten up with others outside the gym and that "Albanians make trouble". If he had absolute control of the place, he wouldn't be afraid to have Albanians in class.

In order to secure a free room for classes in the municipal gym of Lefkada, the Tae Kwon Do teacher, together with some students, had founded a sports club, the Lefkada Tae Kwon Do Sports Association. In this club, from the first elections for its board of directors that I passed, I was elected president. I was not present at the elections, because I had some work in Athens, but I had told the others that I was available for the club and, when I was in Athens, they announced to me that they had elected me president. This position, although accompanied by working disinterestedly for the club, made me feel more comfortable in the classes and secured me some respect. The teacher, in order to make the association known to his students and especially to their parents, because the great majority of his students were elementary, middle and high school children, invited me to be present every time he organized exams. In the exams, I used to fill in the diplomas awarded to those who passed the exams, along with the colored belts, depending on the level of each student. However, I don't remember anyone failing and not passing the exams. And I said, above, that the teacher invited me to the exams to make the club known, because the exams were public, i.e. they were held in front of the students' parents. In these, parents admired their children's athletic performance and felt that the money they gave for the lessons was not wasted.

The Tae Kwon Do seminar and the training sessions at a seaside park in Preveza

In 2002 the club together with the Tae Kwon Do club "Euclea" of Preveza, hosted a weekly Tae Kwon Do seminar, where with daily intensive lessons one could get a higher belt than the one he had. This seminar was organized every year in a different city and was led by the teacher Panagiotis Gialamas who at that time had a black belt with 7 Dan. At that time, our teacher had 4 Dan I think. I also took part in this seminar and I will not forget the impression I made on the head teacher, Gialamas, because of my age. I was the oldest student! For me, practicing Tae Kwon Do at the age of 46 was not only very good for my health but it also put me in a good mood which, I admit, for various reasons, was not good at the time. Training in Tae Kwon Do during those years made me avoid, later on, the various problems with one's back and legs that one acquires in old age. I can't say, though, that I had the potential that the younger students had. I remember that when, as part of our daily training, we ran every morning from the closed gym of Lefkada to the sea, in the area of the mills, I got a strong chest pain from running. That is why there were not few the times when I stopped running and covered some part of the distance on foot. And I faced the same problem in another phase, when the Tae Kwon Do teacher called us outside of Preveza, to a seaside park, to train some days of the week. A fellow athlete of mine was taking me there with his car. I remember that before practicing Tae Kwon Do techniques, we would all run a distance of several kilometers. I always stayed behind and always covered part of the distance walking and not running. But the teacher, who was about my age, never got tired. Then I understood the difference between someone doing gymnastics all his life and doing it only for some years of his life.

The branch of the Association of Conscientious Objectors in Lefkada

In 2002, efforts were also being made to officially recognize the Association of Conscientious Objectors as a union. In this context, I had gone to Athens with Maragakis's car a couple of times. I had no interest in the Association being officially recognized, but some believed that as an official union it could be financed with European Union funds. It was the time when he had appeared in Lefkada with his wife and two children and the other conscientious objector who had spent a year and a half in prison, when Maragakis was also inside: Thanasis Makris. With him and Maragakis, when the war in Iraq started in 2003, we issued a proclamation against the war and signed: Association of Conscientious Objectors – Lefkada Branch. This proclamation, which I had written and asked the world not to limit itself to protests against the Americans, who had invaded Iraq, but to accept the refugees who were

coming to Greece because of the war and not to abandon them to the whims of the border guards and of the police, Maragakis would read it at the gathering, which the parties and the authorities had called in the square of Agios Minas in Lefkada. Maragakis had secured a position as a speaker and that's why he could do it. But he didn't do it and instead of our announcement he read a painless text he had written as a representative of the Hellenic Social Forum. I, so that my effort to write the proclamation would not go to waste, I pasted two copies on some sheet metal that was opposite the church of Agios Minas and I distributed two or three more to some students that the Communist Party's Youth had brought from the high schools of Lefkada, to demonstrate against the Americans.

My sad experience of Greek hospitals because of the treatment my father in-law and my mother had before they died – The Great Earthquake in Lefkada in 2003

2003 was generally a bad period of my life, because my mother, who had been bedridden since 2000, was going from bad to worse, I was away from her and I was saving money even on long distance phones, because a tenant of mine who he gave the rent on which, for the most part, our survival depended, he gave it to us once in a while until he stopped giving it to us altogether, and, if Sophia had not found some employment in her brother's shop , we wouldn't even be able to pay our bills. Finally, my mother entered the Sismanoglio hospital before Easter 2003 for tests and there, instead of getting better, after about two weeks she fell into a coma and died. The cause of death was given as "aspiration" as if she were a baby. In charge of her, before she died, was a young female doctor who happened to be in charge of the floor where my mother was being treated. She didn't do anything special to help her when she fell into a coma and didn't even put her in the intensive care unit. Even I, when I had gone to inquire about my mother's progress, was treated with abruptness, and, even at noon before the afternoon of my mother's death, she would not let me approach to hear what a group of doctors were discussing above my mother's bedside during their daily tour of the hospital wards.

I barely managed to be present when my mother was dying, because earlier a security guard had come and wanted to expel the relatives who were helping their sick, if there were more than one of them for each sick person. And there were two people at my mother's bedside, me and a neighbor and friend of hers for decades. Fortunately, a patient in the ward had no relative to watch over her and my mother's friend said she had come for her. In conclusion, it is no exaggeration that my mother was treated like an unwanted poor relative by the doctors paid by the government. And, in general, the hospital staff, seem to feel no obligation towards the patients, judging by the way my mother-in-law and father-in-law had been

treated in the past. The patients who, due to lack of money to go to private hospitals, end up in the public hospitals, face aggressive behavior towards them and their relatives, when they demand attention and are not limited to being treated like numbers. I will never forget how badly a doctor at the hospital spoke to an old man who asked him for some strong painkiller injection, because with what they gave him, his pains did not go away. The doctor, not only did not give him the injection that the patient asked for, but he talked to him like a bum. Although twenty whole years had passed since the doctor on the hospital floor where my father-in-law died (Red Cross Hospital) would not give my father-in-law even the slightest painkiller to relieve his pain, the treatment of patients who they had resorted, due to lack of money, to the public health system had not changed.

In the summer of 2003, on the eve of the 15th of August, a strong earthquake occurred in Lefkada, the biggest I have experienced in my life. Although the things that were inside the rooms, on top of bookcases, refrigerators, etc., all fell down due to the vibration and it took me hours to rearrange what wasn't broken, our house was built with anti-seismic specifications so it lasted, as did the majority of the houses in Lefkada. Only some workers' apartment buildings became uninhabited, i.e. apartment buildings built by public contractors who, as is known, steal in materials and in fees to the necessary technicians, as well as some old farmhouses. Only two or three dead from the earthquake were recovered. One of them was a foreign tourist who got crushed on some beach since the earthquake happened at about eight in the morning.

Giorgos Nakratzas, Nasos Theodoridis and the founding of the Anti-Nationalist Movement

Also in 2003, on September 23, I took part in the founding conference of the Anti-Nationalist Movement that took place in a room of the old buildings of the National Technical University located in Patision. The Antinationalist Movement, as I understand it, was created after a proposal from my friend and colleague in the Association of Conscientious Objectors Nasos Theodoridis to the great anti-nationalist author, the pulmonologist Dr. Giorgos Nakratzas. Nakratzas had lived for many years in the Netherlands, where he ran a clinic, as I had heard, and that is why, in order to hold the founding conference of the Anti-Nationalist Movement, he had come to Athens for a while. He came to Greece from time to time, but not to Athens but to Thessaloniki, because he was a Thessalonian. Two national Macedonians, members of the Greek Macedonian minority, Voskopoulos, representative of the "Rainbow" party and Parisis, director of the Greek office of the European bureau for the least spoken languages, also took part in this conference. From them I heard for the first time the forbidden language in Greece: Macedonian. The representative of the Feminist Center of Athens, Sissy Vovou, also took part, as well as the first female member of the Association of C.O.s and later secretary of the Greek section of Amnesty International Alexia Tsouni. They also took part: The well-known anti-nationalist writer Akis Gavrielidis, Nasos Theodoridis of course, the conscientious objector and later head of the Amnesty's initiative for the conscientious objectors Giorgos Karatzas, as well as Gousetis who often wrote articles in "Avgi" and was also in charge of the magazine that was publishing the Greek section of Amnesty International. The founding declaration entitled "Manifesto of the Anti-Nationalist Movement" was drawn up, from what I understand, by Nakratzas after consultation with some of the others. Sissy Vovou reacted to this Manifesto mainly, because it did not say anything about the war in Iraq (as if this war was the work of Greek nationalism) and Gousetis, because it did not say about the persecution of the Greeks of Istanbul in 1955. Vovou did not sit until the end of the conference, while Gousetis secured from Nakratzas a promise that they would correct the text together, but in a way that everyone would like. In the end, Gousetis, from what I understood, withdrew and did not join the Anti-Nationalist Movement, and also Gavrielidis did not, without me ever to know why. Joined, nevertheless, Somalis, an amiable anti-nationalist biochemist, known to the Macedonians and to Nacratzas. Karatzas, because Gousetis' proposal was not finally incorporated, did not join the Anti-Nationalist Movement and Alexia followed him, after she had previously pissed off Nakratzas, because in her reply to his e-mail she had initially stated that she would participate in the Anti-Nationalist Movement. When she left, he claimed that she had agreed to participate without having read the Manifesto.

This was the first and last time I saw the great Nakratzas who later, together with Theodoridis, Somalis and me, became a member of the Coordinating Committee of the Anti-Nationalist Movement. And although, we maintained almost daily telephone communication, he also left the Anti-Nationalist Party, after a disagreement with me on putting to a vote his proposal to send an open letter to the then Prime Minister Karamanlis. He had previously had a phone fight with me, when at sometime he asked me if my friend and comrade Giannis Scandalis, who was accused, posthumously, of being a member of the revolutionary organization "November 17", had killed, and I had answered him that I wasn't obliged to give him an account of my dead friend. This happened when Nakratzas learned that, in Athens, an Albanian had hijacked an intercity bus of the KTEL (Common Fund of Buses) of Attiki and this had made him furious. Fortunately, this hijacking had a happy ending and the Albanian was not killed, as it had been the case with another bus hijacker whose hijacking was made into a movie. I had defended the Albanian, asking Nakratzas to think how desperate he would be to carry out the bus hijacking, but Nakratzas insisted that he a terrorist. I told him that as a terrorist they had also convicted my friend and comrade Giannis Scandalis, who was a very good person. It was then that Nakratzas asked me to tell him if Scandalis killed, in order to label him a terrorist as well. I preferred not to answer and enrage Nakratzas, rather than give him the right to curse my dead friend (he had been killed in a car accident on December 30, 1994, on the day of his 42nd birthday).

The Association of Conscientious Objectors is recognized officially as an association, the first elections of the new association and my departure from the Association of C.O.s for which I had done a lot and it had offered me a lot

Before Nakratzas left the Anti-Nationalist Movement, something which happened after a couple of years of its founding, the Association of Conscientious Objectors had been recognized as an association by the courts. I was in the five-member governing committee that submitted the statutes of this association to the Court of First Instance. Unfortunately, after the official recognition of the Association of C.O.s, I was not to stay long in it. I left after the first election for the board of directors. Specifically, things developed as follows: Even before the time when Karatzas refused to join the Anti-Nationalist Movement, I had started to cool off with him, because he, as a former member of the New Left Current, a group that had left the Greek communist party, attacked me for being an anarchist. Something common among communists, who hate anarchists because the latter denounce the communists' all-out struggle to impose their one-party dictatorship. My disagreements with Karatzas were also recorded in our correspondence with an exchange of written accusations, which reached the Association. Giannis Chrysovergis, as my political opponent in the Association, had expressed his satisfaction for my conflict with Karatzas at the

assembly we held for the board elections. I participated in this meeting as a candidate member of the Board of Directors and I was the only one who wrote a multi-page text explaining why I wanted to be elected. In it I denounced the anti-Western, anti-imperialist direction, towards which Karatzas, as a communist from a group that broke away from the anti-imperialist and anti-Western communist party, attempted to lead the Association. But the ecologists of the Association, led by Thanasis Makris, allied themselves with Karatzas against me, because they too never liked the anarchists, like me. They went so far as to put to a vote how many minutes they would give me to read my text, even though before and after the election, they talked for hours, without an agenda and without any planning. Makris proposed only five minutes, and his proposal was accepted, with the result that I had time to read only half of my text. And in the elections, only three people voted for me, with the result that I was not elected for one vote, because, in order to be elected, five votes were needed. Instead, Michalis Moutousis was elected who, although a member of the Association, had served an unarmed term in the army. And yet we had warned him, before he enlisted, that unarmed service was service. After this disgrace, i.e. that a person who had served was elected and I, who for 10 years had done so much for the Association, and was not even allowed to read my paper, was not elected, I considered that I had no business in it the collective, I declared my resignation and left. After I left, Giannis Serifis came to the offices of the Association, where the meeting was taking place, and asked for me, because I had told him I would be there. He didn't find me. I was glad that they saw the Serifis asking for me, because I thought that this way they would understand that I might be a nuisance to them, but even personalities like Sherifis were interested in me. Anyway, about twenty-five people had gathered in this assembly. Never again in the future were so many assembled, and never again at the meeting of the Association for elections was there a quorum. In the third election for the election of the Board of Directors so few gathered that they all became members of the Board of Directors. Then they could not gather people even for an assembly for elections, the president Petromelidis resigned and the Thessaloniki environmentalist Giannis Glarnetazis took over as president for life, who in a tribute to conscientious objection in the newspaper "Eleftherotypia" had stated that he had been honored with the Friedrich Sigmund-Sulze Peace Prize, while the truth is that the Association had been honored with it and I had received it. As I have written, I disliked this man since the day I met him at the Association offices. For the record, I must say that Petromelidis and Glarnetazis, like the old c.o. Sotiropoulos, never did an alternative social term, although within the context of the Association they always clashed with those who did not accept it and demanded the abolition of compulsory conscription. This is what Nathanail and I did first, and then Spyros Psychas, when he found that the 1997 law did not

guarantee the rights of conscientious objectors, as they had been formulated by the Association of C.O.s since its inception.

I was very sad leaving the Association, because I had believed in it and had worked a lot for it, especially because it had honored me with the position of treasurer and I had also represented it in Germany, at the ceremony of the prize, and at Norway, at the pan-European meeting of the objectors, in 1997. Unfortunately, since the Association was founded, it was in the hands of ecologists like Psychas, Chrysovergis, Glarnetatzis, Thanasis and Panagiotis Makris and Maragakis, and they kept its reins until the end. All the total objectors like me and Krontiras, who appeared until 1999, could not influence the course of the Association. And despite my persistent efforts to work with the total objectors, some of the best known of whom, like Pavlos Nathanail, used to come to our meetings in the 1990s, the Association, dominated by environmentalists, never got along well with them.

The Anti-Nationalist Movement survives and does not have the fate of the "Committee for the Rights of Foreign Workers and Minorities" and the "group for prisons"

Fortunately, when I left the Association in 2004, I joined the Anti-Nationalist Movement and thus had a collective, where I could dedicate my selfless efforts for a better life and a better human being. From 2005 or 2006, in fact, I started holding the Anti-Nationalist Movement's bench at the annual anti-racist festival held in Athens. In fact, I also found a colleague who undertook to make our magazine, when we decided to publish a magazine. I had brought him to the Anti-Nationalist Movement. Unfortunately, he didn't stay long because, after the third issue of our magazine, he got into a fight with me because I criticized him for the format of the magazine that didn't meet the specifications we had agreed upon. I think I was right to protest, because the format of the third issue differed from the format of the second and first. For me, this reality was very indigestible, i.e. not being able to ensure a uniform format in all issues of the magazine. I had also taken over and built a website for Anti-Nationalist Movement and was updating it regularly. Unfortunately, after some years, the server that hosted the website for a fee closed and we were left without this website. Fortunately, a member of the Anti-nationalist Movement managed to collect all our posts up to that point in a blog, which still exists. And a few years ago another member opened a Facebook page for us.

At least the colleague I mentioned above left Anti-Nationalist Movement, because he messed with me, while other colleagues stopped communicating with our

collective without even telling us the reason. I guess they were moved away due to "workload". This kind of withdrawal from a collective in which I participated, I saw it many times in my life. In particular, the second "Committee for the Rights of Foreign Workers and Minorities" ceased to function, because in the end only Sophia and I remained, as did the "Group for Prisons". The bad thing is that in the "Group forprisons" some hopes were also placed by various prisoners, with the consequence that these hopes turned out to be in vain. If, of course, these collectives received money from the European Union, or from the Greek state, as is the case with many NGOs, they would not see their members disappear due to "workload". For myself and Sophia, I can boast that almost in all the groups where we participated, we stayed consistent until the end.

Another colleague of ours who had joined the Anti-Nationalist Movement after it was founded messed with us because, while criticizing Milosevic and, in general, the Serbian war criminals of the war in the former Yugoslavia (1992-1999), we did not at the same time criticize the Americans and the Europeans whom he, like almost all Greeks, considered responsible for the war in the former Yugoslavia. Till then he had not realized, it seems, how distorted the news always reached Greece, when they were questioning the validity of the Greek nationalism. This nationalism the leftists cover behind the cloak of their anti-imperialism. So, he probably believed that, without the Americans and Europeans, Yugoslavia would not have broken up into the federated republics of which it was composed. This, at least, was the prevailing opinion among the Greeks at the time. Perhaps this colleague of ours, after some years, realized that Yugoslavia would fall apart even without the Americans and the Europeans, so he asked and rejoined the Anti-Nationalist Movement.

Our trip to Ithaca and the revival of my hypochondria – One good priest

That year (2005), I managed to go again to Ithaca, where I had not gone since 1964, together with my own family, this time. I had previously contacted the sister of Giannis Felekis, Areti, for whom I had been informed that she lived there permanently and ran a bookstore. She didn't remember that we used to sell "Workers' Struggle" together at political rallies and outside the factories, but she vaguely remembered my story, that is, that I had gone to prison for political reasons with Sophia. Anyway, Areti picked us up in her car from the back part of the island, where used to dock the boat coming from Lefkada during the winter and spring months, and found us a house to rent. In addition to the company we kept the evenings we stayed there, she also called an old acquaintance of ours, who was from Ithaca and at that time lived in Ithaca, to tell him to meet us. This was the poet Giorgos Douglas, whom we had met at Katerina Gogou's house. Indeed, we went

and found Daglas, whom we had not seen for 24 years, in Frikes,on the northern side of the island. And he and we were very happy because we met again and from then on, we started to have more regular contacts, i.e. we saw each other once in a while, when he came to Athens. The last time I sat and talked with him was when he had come to Athens because of problems he had with his heart. However, his problems were overcome, at least at that time. On the contrary, Areti did not manage to overcome the health problems she developed a few years after our visit to Ithaca, and she died at the age of 51, without us having met her again until then.

In 2005 I had another severe attack of hypochondria. This had to do with severe breathing problems I had, perhaps due to being a smoker and also living in the city of Lefkada, where humidity is a "trademark". It took a few months until I decided to go to the psychiatrist I had seen before, to help me get over the crisis, since I was afraid to go to a pathologist or a pulmonologist who could diagnose that I had cancer. Since my psychiatrist was in Athens, I had to take the bus from Lefkada and go to Athens to visit him. Until this was done, I was tormented throughout the summer of 2005 by the idea of death, to the extent that I could hear the bands from the Lefkada dance festival passing by our house in August 2005, and remember the poem of Kavafis "Apoleipein o Theos Antonion", as if the bands were the "invisible troupe", mentioned by Kavafis in this poem. Even my physical condition somehow "conspired" against me, because I remember that, sometime I had gone to the sea, in the summer of 2005, together with the father of a classmate of my son who was a mathematician and quite a gentle person, and I could not bear to stay more than ten or fifteen minutes in the water, although we had found a neighbor of mine in the sea, who, for the first time, told me, for the mathematician to hear, that she had sided with me politically, when I was "inside" . I wanted, on that occasion, to talk a little about what she had done for me and Sophia when we were in prison, but I felt so bad that I got out of the water and lay down on the sand to recover. After all, I didn't have cancer and I didn't die. But, after some years, I learned that this neighbor of ours died, even though she was younger than me. The last thing I remember from that attack of hypochondria is that, in October, before to take the bus to Athens, I had passed outside an old church, the church of Agioi Anargyri which is near our house in Lefkada, and I had looked from the door inside, to get a glimpse of its artistic treasures. Then the priest who happened to be there had seen me and called me inside, when I told him about the reason I had looked, after his related question. This priest, Nikolaos Fragoulis, offered to show me around all the artistic treasures of the church and to tell me its history, without asking me why I did not make any crosses, as Christians do when they enter churches, and without to be disturbed that my interest in this church was only artistic. And he turned out to be a good tour guide too. He told me details about each painting hung on the walls of the church, a painting of Western style and not Byzantine and therefore really interesting from an aesthetic point of view, and at the end he also gave me a card with the "Three Hierarchs" of the Ionian Islands, Saint Spyridon, Saint Gerasimos and Saint Dionysios, on the back of which he wrote that he wished God to grant me health and

"everything good". I, because of my hypochondria, had then hoped that I would escape illness and death, so that the priest's wish would be fulfilled, without, of course, believing in any god. And indeed, his wish came true even without a god, with the result that I am still alive, while he, like my neighbor whom I had found in the sea at that time, have long since died.

With my son in Metsovo 31 years after I passed by it as a student during the six-day school excursion

At the end of 2005 I also managed to go again to Metsovo, the hometown of my paternal grandmother, where I had not gone since 1974. By then we had made a stop there during the six-day school excursion of my class , when I was finishing the sixth form high school. Now it was Christmas and New Year's holidays, so my children did not have school, so I could take my son with me to Metsovo. It was the first time I saw Metsovo covered in snow, but to see a lot of snow, which my son had never seen before, we had to go up to the ski center which is on the mountain above Metsovo, at the height of the Katara pass. My son, for the first time, built a snowman there and saw bear footprints in the snow. Another remarkable thing about Metsovo is that there my son heard for the first time the Vlach language which was once spoken by everyone in Metsovo but when we went there only some old people spoke it. In this way, my son saw with his own eyes that not all so-called Greeks are Greeks, but some of them belong to ethnic minorities, whose existence is silenced, especially in school. I had told my son what was wrong with the school by that time and he had the opportunity to see it with his own eyes when he returned to school after the Christmas holidays. In particular, he had told the class that he had heard another language being spoken in Metsovo and his teacher, later secretary of the New Democracy party in Lefkada, had "corrected" him saying that it was not another language but a Greek idiom!

This trip to Metsovo was the only one I ever went only me and my son. In fact, we happened to stay in the same hotel that I had stayed in in 1969, when I had gone there with my father and the rest of the family. That is why I felt that I was following in my father's footsteps and that I did very well to take my son to know the place of origin of his great-grandmother, about whom I did not fail to tell him that she was also a Vlach. Also I wanted him to see that Metsovo did not have much to envy from Athens, since it had its own remarkable culture and history, of which my son got a taste by visiting with me the mansion of the Averovs, with whose money it was built the most important university institution in Greece, the National Technical University of Athens (Polytechnic University). We also visited the

Metsovo art gallery, where there is a large collection of paintings. When we visited Metsovo, my son was 11 years old, i.e. at an age when, usually, children still have good relations with their parents, from whom they still expect a lot. Later, in high school, children realize the limits of their parents, who, first of all, are unable to help them either in their studies or in the attacks they receive from their classmates when the latter are bullies. I, anyway, had such a good relationship with my son at that time, that in Metsovo he followed me to the museums and all the sights without complaint. We then walked a long way up the slopes of Metsovo and took pictures at its public fountains, from which cool water flows continuously, all year round. We even admired its old houses which are reliable examples of the architecture of Epirus. We even drank its famous wine, "Katogi Averof", once. We left aside the economy that made us eat cookies, potato chips or souvlaki every day, and we sat in a restaurant in Metsovo Square. After all this, I hope that my son, even then, got a taste of his father's interests and of what the latter is looking for in a city he visits for leisure and not for work. Also, I think he found out that his father is a civilized man, because he never acted tough with him but instead made sure that they never quarrel while the two of them were alone. I guess he still found that his father had a lot to tell him, because he knew a lot and was interested in passing it on to his son. And he wasn't looking for other adults to hang out with, as if hanging out with his son was boring.

This is how we spent the days that my son and I stayed in Metsovo, namely with a lot of walking and sightseeing, even at the ski resort that was not yet operational at the time. In fact, on the last day, just before we left, there was a snowstorm that I had never seen before in my life, just as my son had never seen it before either. Especially for him this was a happy moment, because of all the scenery what interested him the most in Metsovo was the snow, even before we went to Metsovo. Specifically, the reason he had followed me to Metsovo and had not gone to Athens, where his mother and sister had gone in those days, was to see snow. And on the last day the snow was falling so thick that the bus we took to get down from Metsovo to Ioannina, got stuck for an hour outside Metsovo, due to snow. Of course, during our bus ride to Ioannina, the view from the bus windows was spectacular: Snow-capped peaks of high mountains and deep valleys besides the road that you could see them from above. And just before Ioannina the sight of the lake of Ioannina from above was impressive. It is no exaggeration that this visit to Metsovo, like the visit with my father 36 years ago, will remain unforgettable for me and I imagine it will remain for my son as well. If he won’t remember it as the only time he was alone somewhere with his father, I guess he will remember it because he was given, for the first time, the opportunity to know another side of Greece: Its tall and "eagle-shaped", as Elytis calls them, mountains. Mountains drenched in blood, if you think

about how many warriors have left their bones there, during the wars this country has known, with the last being the civil war of 1946-1949, when the rebels of the communist Democratic Army besieged Metsovo for a few days, in their attempt to take a city in their hands, since they had none.

ALONE IN LEFKADA AND THE AUTONOMOUS INITIATIVE OF LEFKADA

The return of Sophia and my children to Exarcheia

The fact that Sophia and my daughter did not join us on this trip to Metsovo was not, as it turned out, something that should have gone unnoticed. They did not stay, as I said, in Lefkada but went to Athens. There they were hosted by a childhood friend of Sophia's, who lived in Neapolis Exarcheia. Neapolis Exarcheia was the neighborhood of Athens where we lived ten years ago, before we moved to Lefkada. And, as it turned out in retrospect, after staying with her friend for a few days, Sophia missed her life in Athens and began to make plans for how she would return to Athens, to her old neighborhood, where she would now have her childhood friend with her. She was going to carry out these plans the following year, taking advantage of a loan offered to her by a bank and I advised her to take it. When I advised her to get it I couldn't imagine what she would use it for. If I had known, I wouldn't have suggested it to her. I wouldn't suggest it to her, because I didn't want us to leave Lefkada, where we didn't pay rent, and find ourselves in Athens with rent and utilities. After all, life in the center of Athens cannot be compared to life in Lefkada from an environmental point of view: Noise pollution, air pollution, garbage thrown on the streets, crowded public transport, cars and motorbikes occupying the sidewalks and so many other things burdening the environment, one finds them in the center of Athens while not in Lefkada. This was also the reason why the pediatrician we had for the children, when they were babies, had recommended us to go and stay in Lefkada for their sake, when she had learned that we had a house in Lefkada. Besides, hadn't we suffered enough by changing houses every now and then and always having a landlord over our heads? But Sophia didn't take this into account in order to stay in Athens. And it wasn't just Athens that she liked much more than Lefkada. She didn't get along with me consistently, and every now and then, we would quarrel. Although this was something to be expected after 25 years of living together and indeed, the last 10, in a small house and with terrible financial problems, this weighed so heavily on Sophia that before she left Lefkada, after one last quarrel with me, she told me that she was starting to change her mind after so many things I told her not to leave, but that quarrel made her finalize her decision to leave.

So she left, taking the children with him and telling me that she would have to rent the house in Lefkada, in order to pay the rent of the house in Athens. At the age of 50 at the time, in 2006, and having carried all my things to Lefkada, I had no desire to "take my things on my back" and return to the uncertainty and temporary nature that the rented houses represented for me. So I preferred to pay her the amount she hoped she would get if she rented the house in Lefkada. Of course, since she left

and took the children with her, regardless of my contrary opinion and I did not help her at all in moving and finding a house in Athens. But her brother and her childhood friend helped her. And in September of 2006, after Sophia's initiative, our coexistence that had lasted for 25 years ended. Although I was quite saddened by this development, the fact that death did not interrupt our coexistence, as it had interrupted my parents' cohabitation after 27 years, was a positive thing. Of course, we had already been married for more years than my parents when my father died. In 2006 we had already been married for 29 years!

Sophia may have taken the children and left, but I had no intention of leaving them at her absolute discretion and them to be deprived of what I could still offer them. That's why I didn't break up with Sophia for good, but since she settled in Athens I went often and spent some time near my family. Sophia had no objection to this, so my children were not left without a father in their teenage years. On the other hand, I did not sacrifice my dignity by accepting my forced stay in Athens, just as I had not sacrificed it by accepting military service. I think that just this decision of mine not to please Sophia would be a good lesson to my children who, if I did please Sophia, they would see in my face a man unworthy of being a good example to the children of him, as he would lack strength of character and make him whatever his wife wanted.

I finally find anarchist comrades in Lefkada:

The Autonomous Initiative of Lefkada

I don't remember how I spent the first time alone in Lefkada. I certainly shouldn't have felt too lonely, since the internet brings you, if you want, in daily contact with a lot of people. I especially could not feel alone and even because I had undertaken the promotion of Anti-Nationalist Movement through the internet and even the correspondence with the other members satisfied to some extent my needs for a healthy sociability. After all, I was not very lonely, if it can be considered loneliness the fact that I often kept company with only one friend: One fine day the son of a priest found me in the street and told me that he had heard a lot about me and knew, more or less, the story which made him feel appreciation for me. I found that he was like-minded and I was happy because, after so many years in Lefkada, I was getting an ideological comrade. The fact that he was also a priest’s son reminded me of Savopoulos' song about the "dardana" Zozo, from his first album, "Truck", who, despite being poor and dumb, managed to mislead a gay, the priest's son, who was a man of gallantry. I, of course, was neither poor nor stupid and above all not a woman, but the priest's son was not going to become a pimp like the priest's son in Savopoulos' song. But I was flattered by the fact that the child of a man high in power, such as a priest, succeeded to detach himself from a sure future as a man of

power, because he was
convinced of the ideas I followed. This meant that these ideas were not at all contemptible to the power and I, though I may have been insignificant and harmless to the authority, was not so insignificant and harmless that I could not "mislead" its children!

Now, of course, it would be an exaggeration to say that my own ideas fascinated this fellow, since he had developed into a like-minded person before he met me. Much less can I claim ownership of anarchist ideas. But the fact that these ideas were spreading even in Lefkada made me feel that I was on the right path. And the fact that, when my comrade and I met in person, he decided to work together with me, somehow justifies me when I say that I "misled" him. Because, indeed, we decided to work together, and form a group together with other Lefkadians he knew, and hold an event in an open space. This is how the "once upon a time" "Autonomous Initiative of Lefkada" was created.

This collective, although it did not last long, regardless of whether we also provided it with an email address and a website (blog), was a valuable experience for me, because until then I had not appeared as an anarchist in Lefkada and it bothered me to feel like a politician imprisoned in exile, for want of companions. In this group I met comrades, at least one of whom maintained our friendship and cooperation even when our group had essentially ceased to exist. Until then my political activities in Lefkada were not related to anarchists but to the Ecological Initiative and to conscientious objection, as we have seen previously. I may have previously addressed Sy.Riz.A. (the party of the left that became government in 2015) of Lefkada to ask for it support to Giannis Serifis, but with Sy.Riz.A. I had no ideological connection. Thus, when I collaborated with anarchists in the milieu of this initiative, I felt that, finally, in Lefkada I was then what I was in Athens: An anarchist. At least in the eyes of my companions and not in my own, because, of course, when I was in Lefkada or anywhere else but Athens, I did not cease to see myself as an anarchist.

The event of the Autonomous Initiative of Lefkada against human trafficking

Now, regarding the event, the proposal from the comrade who had found me, was for an event to defend the free spaces of the cities that are increasingly restricted by the modern state. And this proposal was accepted by the others. The others were also students like him but there was also a female student. I, the eldest of age, I was not satisfied with the suggestion of the free spaces, and, seizing the opportunity to push my colleagues into something which I was most distressed at, I suggested that we should concern ourselves about human trafficking. Human trafficking had a special meaning for me, because I believed then and still believe that the trafficked women are in the worst position of all in relation to the social scale. They suffer the most oppression and exploitation and therefore need the most support. After all,

those who are responsible for the suffering of these women and girls, i.e. the traffickers, pimps and clients, do not leave the rest of society, like us, untouched, because the criminal behavior they have towards those women and girls they have, as much as they can, also against anyone else. In short: They step on corpses. By denouncing and fighting them we are not only doing good to their immediate victims but also to the whole society in general. Fortunately, arguments like the ones I'm writing now were enough to convince the Lefkadian comrades and so it was decided to hold an event against human trafficking. And even to write a relevant text. So, in the end, two events were decided: One against human trafficking and one for free spaces.

To hold the events, we chose the open space behind the Public Library of Lefkada, in the neighborhood called Markas, where used to be the central market of Lefkada. The word Markas must have something to do with the Italian "mercato"(market). This spot had two advantages: First we would have electricity from the library, where we expected not to be denied it, and secondly there was the back door to the library garden where we could hang a white sheet to do the projections. Because we thought that our events should consist of screenings followed by discussion. We would get chairs from the Labor Center of Lefkada. Another member of our collective, who played in amateur rock music groups, would bring us a small microphone setup, we would get a video projector from some church and I would bring my computer. We would also print A3 posters and leaflets for each event.

Indeed, everything we had planned went as planned and one fine afternoon in August 2007, we held our first event, against human trafficking, where we screened the BBC documentary 'The Real Sex Traffick'. Although not many people came, since there weren't many chairs either, we looked as we were many. Those who came were mostly friends and relatives. Regarding our topic, only I among the organizers spoke, but luckily our relatives and friends started some discussion. I was impressed that the 15-year-old daughter of one of Sophia's cousins from Lefkada, who lived in Athens but was there with her parents for summer vacation, also spoke about the issue.

An image from the event against human trafficking

The second event of the Lefkada Autonomous Initiative – My acquaintance with the Agrinio comrades

At our second event, which took place some days later, an American film was screened that I did not like and I did not speak in the discussion that followed. Nevertheless, everyone else spoke and the positive thing was that we also had comrades from Athens in the audience, who at that time were free camping in the "Pefkoulia" area of the coastal village of Agios Nikitas. They came to our second screening, when they were informed about the first one. In fact, among them was one of the "Circle of Fire" group, which had also produced a brochure against human trafficking. From this brochure he brought to us a few copies. Another comrade who came was one from the hangout in Degleris Square in Peristeri, who I had not seen since 1995. The last time I saw him was after the demonstration for the stabbing of the squatter Stathopoulos by Manologlou, which I have mentioned above, which ended in riots, as it was planned. This comrade was also at that demonstration.

After the event, together with this comrade, a friendly couple of his who were vacationing together and all the comrades from the Autonomous Initiative of Lefkada, except one, we went to the main square of Lefkada and sat in a coffee shop until four o'clock in the morning, discussing the movement. There I felt that,

finally"anarchy had reached Lefkada". Unfortunately, although as an initiative we created a website (blog) and an internal mailing list, and despite the valiant efforts of Sophia for communication between us through them (Sophia, meanwhile, had joined the initiative together with our daughter), we did not manage to we organize another event in Lefkada the following year and then the initiative faded. I can't say we didn't try though. And in this effort, we also had allies from Agrinio, one of whom played in the amateur punk band "Amok". Specifically, next summer, the summer of 2008, we planned as an initiative to organize an event, which would include a screening, a discussion and a concert. In fact, a Turkish friend of mine, a political refugee, Alexandros, who had then come with me from Athens to find a job in Lefkada and had found, had also prepared a
color poster for us. The topic of the event, after my own proposal, was chosen to be racism against the Roma (Gypsies). In Lefkada there were and still are gypsies, who live in shacks, without electricity or running water, next to the city's garbage dump. I considered that they are the most wronged of the residents of Lefkada and that's why I thought of doing something to make the town's society aware of them. Unfortunately, despite the willingness of the friends from Agrinio to help us with sound and their band as well as with other groups that they would bring to play, in the end only one of the friends from Lefkada agreed to carry the burden of the organization with me and therefore, after much discussion, the idea was abandoned.

There is a saying: Nothing is wasted. And indeed, we may not have managed to organize together with the Agrinio comrades an event in Lefkada in 2008, but from that summer I acquired very good relations with them and, apart from visiting Agrinio many times to attend their events, we also made some organizational efforts together, as well as some trips, to participate in mobilizations in Western Greece, as we will see below. In fact, my good relations with them continue to this day. Regarding, finally, my relations with the Lefkadian comrades, with one of them I continued to meet often and cooperated politically sometime, while with two others we met again at demonstrations.

MY DAUGHTER AT UNIVERSITY AND MY ACTION FOR AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL – THE FIGHT AGAINST RACISM

My daughter at university, 15-year-old Alexis Grigoropoulos in the grave murdered by a policeman, like 15-year-old Michalis Kaltezas 23 years ago: The reaction of the movement in Volos

2008 was important for many as well for me for various reasons. For me, because this year my daughter was admitted to the university, to the Department of Spatial Planning, Urban Planning and Regional Development of the Polytechnic School of the University of Thessaly, and for many it was important (and for me of course), because in December of this year many people, mainly students, rioted when in Exarchia and elsewhere, after a minor incident on Messolongiou Street, the policeman Korkoneas killed the 15-year-old student Alexis Grigoropoulos. It happened, as we will see below, that I got involved in these riots against the police both in Volos, where my daughter was studying, and in Athens.

Specifically, that night I was at the house my daughter had rented in Volos, an old detouched house in the center of Volos that was demolished a year later, while Sophia was in Exarchia. She called us and told us that a policeman had killed a fifteen- year-old boy and that because of this there had been widespread riots. Then my daughter called her fellow students and learned that the news had spread and so they would gather in the main building of the University of Thessaly, known as the "Dome" because of its shape, to discuss what they would do as an immediate response to the police brutality. We went to this convention together, because I was not unfamiliar with the environment. I had already met the anarchists of Volos who were gathering in the squat of Matsangou (in a building of an old tobacco factory, which had ceased to function for decades), through an old comrade whom I knew from the hangout of Peristeri and now lived permanently in Volos, with his wife and child. In fact, with the comrades of the occupation, or better with the women comrades, because most of the comrades I had met were girls, had been arranged for me to speak in the squat about the refusal of conscription on December 12, as part of multi-day events for the anniversary of the squatting, which had taken place a few years ago.

A lot of people gathered for the discussion in the central hall of the "Dome". And many opinions were heard. I can't say that they were original and that the long hours of discussion were necessary. If this long conversation had any meaning, I would have kept some details in mind. But I kept in mind nothing more than the proposal of a stout comrade, who always imposed himself on the squat of Matsangou with his bulk and his skills in beating others (he knew martial arts). I kept in my memory this proposal, because in the end it prevailed. According to him, we would make a march

of protest to the local police station, and when we arrived, some, who had to declare it from the beginning to the assembly, would each throw a certain small number of stones. Premade episodes that are! We actually did a protest march to the local police station, around three to four in the morning, we didn't get close, because the police had blocked the road, some stones were thrown, the police also threw their tear gas and the march broke up.

The next day, as I learned, it had been agreed to take place a march ending in riots but I didn't go, because I had some health problems. And indeed took place extensive riots on one of the main streets, which runs in front of the university. After the protesters were dispersed by the police, they took refuge in the university, where the police did not enter, because the university is protected by the so-called "student asylum". The other day, Monday, I returned to Athens.

The reaction of the movement in Athens on the third day after the assassination

In Athens, too, there were widespread riots on Sunday, December 7, i.e. the day after the day of the murder. But the "festival" was not over. A march was also called for the next day, Monday. I had in the meantime recovered from the trouble I had with my health, and went to that march on Monday. Of course there were too many people and that's why at the end of the march, as it usually happens, the anti-authoritarians started the riots. What I remember from these riots is that a group of hoodlums were breaking various shop windows at the Panepistimiou street, that had nothing to do with the murder. Of course, they also hit banks, but the banks were sufficiently armored. Only the automatic withdrawal machines of the banks were broken, the ATMs. Nevertheless, the bus stops and the benches were not spared either. The building that was not touched was the building of the Council of the State, the court that grossly wronged me. The fact that it was spared, and always is spared, has often made me think that the rioters who throw the bottles (Molotov cocktails) are to some extent directed by the police plants, who direct them where they want. On the other hand, this building is very nice from an architectural point of view and it would be a shame to be destroyed. This, of course, does not mean that I applaud the destruction of other buildings that are not artistic treasures. And such buildings were destroyed in those widespread episodes. I had the opportunity to see the destruction by fire of a building at the corner of Ippocratous street and Akadimias street, which had a bank on the ground floor. I had remained with the protesters, who had as their base the old building of the University of Athens, which they had occupied by taking advantage of the "student asylum" that prevented the police from entering. That evening both streets perpendicular to the University and surrounding the university building were occupied by masked protesters who spent the night

attacking the police (M.A.T.), who were lined up in the Acadimias Street, in front of the burning building. Lots of rocks and Molotov cocktails fell, but the cops "got away with it", as they say. After all, there were no hand-to-hand fights, because every time the rioters approached the police, the police threw tear gas and dispersed them. The one that didn't get away with it was the building I mentioned earlier. It had caught fire from the Molotov cocktails and although it was protected by police, the fire brigade did not come to put out the fire, with the result that the fire spread from the ground floor to the upper floors. It did not come, just as it has not come for the Kappa-Marousis store building, which burned down in 1991 and took four dead with it. And I don't know if the fire brigade came, at least, for other buildings that were burned that night, since other buildings were burned too. If the fire brigade had come, would they have been burned?

I, however, did not throw anything in those riots. I limited myself to kicking, as much as I could, the tear gas cans that fell on the street, in order them to go to the fires that the rioters had lit to neutralize them. Although I rarely got what I wanted, the fact that, despite my age, I was in the front line of the incidents caused a masked protester to praise my attitude. I didn't wear a mask, because I didn't intend to throw anything to the police. And luckily I was able to withstand the tear gas. The one who supposedly couldn't stand the tear gas, was a masked man who intended to burn down the National Library, some windows of which had already been broken. I, as an avid bibliophile and appreciator of architectural artistic treasures like this library, I started shouting to this protester, and fortunately, other protesters joined me. When I asked why he didn't go forward to throw whatever he wanted at the cops lined up at the Acadimias street, he replied that his eyes were hurting awfully from the tear gas and that's why he couldn't stand facing the cops. Anyway, I stopped this protester from throwing Molotov cocktails through broken glass in the library. If it caught fire, I don't think the fire brigade would come to put it out.

And this protester wasn't the only one who wanted to do harm out of his stupidity. And inside the courtyard of the university, on the side of the National Library, someone else tried to set fire to a van belonging to a municipal authority that happened to be parked in the courtyard. This van had already been destroyed by like-minded people like the last one. And in this case, I intervened and asked the protester to stop trying to burn the van, telling him that if the van caught fire and its gas tank exploded, we would also have casualties among the protesters occupying the university. Fortunately, in this case too, other protesters showed up and took my side, causing the would-be arsonist to abandon his plan.

One last thing I would like to note about that night is that the protesters who continued the incidents were few, a few dozen, and so if the cops wanted to, they would have chased them off the streets around the university and had them forced to take refuge inside the university premises. In fact, if tear gas was thrown at them inside the university, some of those who could not stand the chemicals would leave

the university. It would be enough, of course, that the cops would leave them some way of escape. But the cops never got such an order, just like the firefighters didn't get to put out the fire in the building at the corner of Ippocratous street and Acadimias street. I, however, began to feel that I was watching theater that, however violent, was not interesting, and that's why I returned home sometime in the early hours of the morning.

The demonstrations and the riots following the assassination of Grigoropoulos continue

The demonstrations, some of which were violent, lasted around a month. The initiative was taken by the high school students, who saw in the face of the deceased one of their own people. And since there is a large student population in Athens and Piraeus, thousands came to the funeral of the murdered Alexis Grigoropoulos. I have never been to a funeral with so many people since then, and I never was until then. And even at a funeral, which also ended in riots. Some cursed the policemen who had gathered, they may have even thrown a bottle of water at them, and they didn't lose the opportunity to attack: They threw several tear gasses at us again. I believe that these incidents could have been avoided if the police had not come to the funeral. But they came, because perhaps they were afraid that the crowd would break shop windows, as it had done in the previous days. But I don't think that the crowd would brake the shops around the cemetery, because these don't belong to big businesses but to small shopkeepers and they would defend their properties with violence.

The last demonstration of that year in Athens for Grigoropoulos that I remember, took place in front of the building of the General Police Directorate of Attica (Γ.Α.Δ.Α.) Thousands of students had joined it and because they did not throw stones or Molotov cocktails, the police did not disperse them. Because some people threw bottles of water at the police, the cops outside the building were hidden inside until the demonstration was over. This went on for quite some time, and several anti-cop slogans were shouted, but one of them, "cops cunts you're killing kids," stuck in my throat, mostly because it was being chanted by middle and high school girls, who did not realize that they were perpetuating the sexist perception that having a vulva, i.e. being female, is insulting. From the warm reception this slogan received from the schoolgirls, I understood that no one could take them too seriously. Anyway, after some time, a classmate of Kristiana, who had just finished high school, came out and spoke to the gathered students asking them to go to the place where Grigoropoulos had been killed. This was what they expected those who wanted to leave, since they were probably getting tired, so they broke up. I guess there were only a few that ended up where Grigoropoulos was killed.

My speech on total objection to conscription in the squat of Matsangos in Volos – The concert in the main building of the University of Thessaly, "Tholos"

I didn't stay all that December in Athens. I had to be in Volos on the 12th of the month, where I would speak in the squat of Matsangos. There was also a poster for the events for the anniversary of the squatting, where my name was mentioned as one of the speakers.

The poster for the events for the anniversary of the occupation of Matsangou

This poster was pasted all over the center of Volos and I particularly liked it, because I thought that the publicity given to me by the people of Volos would make

Translated from Greek to English - www.onlinedoctranslator.com

my daughter first to appreciate me more, seeing the good name I had in my movement, and second to feel more comfortable with the comrades of the squat, since they would know that she was the daughter of a well-known anarchist. I suppose my daughter would have appreciated my talk, too, because enough people had come to hear me, and the talk was interesting enough to be followed by a great deal of discussion. I didn't spend too much time answering questions, because I didn't want to monopolize the discussion. At some point I left my seat and went to the counter where they sold drinks and bought something to drink. Needless to say, the burly type of the squat that had been imposed at the assembly for the first reaction to the assassination of Grigoropoulos, during my speech had sat next to me and then he also spoke a little. He ought to show to the others, it seems, that he remained the "team leader". But I have to admit that he was more industrious than the others and that is why, in another demonstration held in Volos for Grigoropoulos, he alone stuck-up relevant posters during the demonstration. And this demonstration, which had actually taken place in a suburb of Volos, in Nea Ionia, was successful, because it had enough people and ended up in a march. In this march, I was approached by a 15-year-old comrade from Skiathos, Vassilis Magos, who had made the acquaintance of me in the squat of Matsangou and had great respect for me, because I had personally met Nikolas Asimos, whom he admired.

Another event from that time when all over Greece, schoolchildren and students, were mobilizing against the impunity of the police, I remember in Volos. It was a concert in the courtyard of the "Dome". It was also a protest against the state repression and my daughter also played the harmonium in it, collaborating with a temporary rock band called "Loose in the wave". It was at this concert that I made the acquaintance of the hip-hop artist Stratos Tzabalatis, known as Javaspa. I really liked his lyrics in his hip-hop songs and I told him that his lyrics are more political than those of Nikolas Asimos. Since then I have seen him again in concerts, both in Agrinio and in Athens, but even in an assembly in the squat of Matsangou, the squat to which he has dedicated one of his songs describing how it happened. From the first time we met, we became friends and he sent me all the CDs of the songs he had released till then.

The Action Team of the Greek branch of Amnesty International in Lefkada: Event against trafficking

I did not spend all that turbulent December in Athens or Volos. I returned to Lefkada, where together with Maragakis and others, mostly friends of Maragakis, we had created an Action Group of the Greek section of Amnesty International and we had prepared an event. I remember that, due to the murder of Grigoropoulos, Amnesty International had canceled a series of events it had planned, but for us, Maragakis got the permission to proceed. And we proceeded: We held an event at the

municipal cinema "Apollo" on the subject of trafficking (forced prostitution). The event included a film screening and discussion. The movie we showed was “Lillian Forever”. Needless to say, the theme of the event was chosen by me, wanting to continue the work I had started with the "Autonomous Initiative of Lefkada". I didn't know about the movie "Lilian forever" but I learned about it when Maragakis addressed Amnesty of Athens and they introduced it to him. Of course I had seen it, before we showed it in the cinema. This was also the reason why, during the screening, I left and together with my friend Kostas, who was also a member of the Amnesty branch, I went to my house to hear news about Grigoropoulos. In them I heard a series of slanders that the lawyer of Korkoneas, Kougias if I remember correctly, had said about Grigoropoulos, such as that he was a hooligan of Olympiakos and that he broke shop windows, etc. And when, after the news, I went back to the cinema for the discussion after the screening of the film, I was pissed off when I heard Maragakis talk about Grigoropoulos and, wanting to support him, accepted, in principle, and reproduced Kouya's slanders. This led to me to tell him off for what he said, something that infuriated him. Although our president at the time (the president of the branch), the architect Stavrakas, spoke, the discussion focused on my conflict with Maragakis and since he was right for many, I was also accused by some. Anyway, this argument was no reason to disband the Amnesty Action Group, so we continued. At least throughout the next year, 2009.

The fight for the rights of the gypsies in Lefkada

Although the activities of our group in Lefkada did not really continue and the following year (2010), during the time we were active, we managed to become known in Lefkada. This is due both to Maragakis, who was known to the Lefkadians from his activities in the Ecological Initiative and from his nominations with the Environmentalists, as well as to the issue we tackled: The rights of the gypsies (Roma). The Gypsies are the most wronged minority in Lefkada and their living conditions on this island are quite bad, worse than the conditions of others who have permanently settled in one place. Since the local authorities were also responsible for their living conditions, it was natural to clash with them and thus become more widely known in Lefkada.

We engaged in our activity for the gypsies after a relevant proposal of the Greek section of Amnesty International. We did not take the initiative on our own. Amnesty gave us the opportunity to choose what to deal with from a series of options that it had forwarded to us. At my own suggestion we dealt with the gypsies. So I managed with the Amnesty Action Group what I failed to do with the Lefkada Autonomous Initiative: To deal with the gypsies.

I cannot say that, as Amnesty International-Lefkada Action Team, we managed to change, even a little, the life of the gypsies of Lefkada town and, I have the impression that, although eight years have passed since then, they are in the same situation . For them, time has stopped, as for the Indians of Peru, whose massacres from 1959 to 1962 are described by Manuel Scorza in his pentalogy "The Silent War". Even today the life of those Indians has not changed. We, as an "Action Team", all we managed to do is to give some publicity to the drama these gypsies are living, just as Scorsa did with the Indians. Specifically, Maragakis published one or two articles about them in a Lefkada newspaper, I published an article about them in the "Avgi" newspaper, our colleague Katerina Vlachodimou spoke about them on her broadcast on the Radio Lefkada radio station, whose director Giannis Thuas was also a member of our collective, and I also uploaded two videos on the Internet. One was filmed by my friend from Lefkada together with Sophia and the other by me. What I filmed is an interview with a young gypsy who was beaten by the Lefkada cops, who also cursed his parents because he couldn't find his ID and didn't follow them. He had come with his parents to sell toys on the street at the religious fair of the Fifteenth of August, as they did every year. I interviewed him at the suggestion of the gypsies of Lefkada, who had understood that I was a reliable person when they saw that I did not promise them anything and that I had defended their rights in an event that we had managed to hold in the town hall of Lefkada, with in the presence of the mayor, the representative of the deputy of Lefkada, the priest of the cathedral of Lefkada and representatives of the parties. The then mayor of Lefkada, Vassilis Fetsis, used to be a member of the Ecological Initiative founded by Maragakis and I saw him coming to some of its meetings since the 1990s. He was an old colleague of Maragakis in this initiative and that is why he came to our event. As far as the priest is concerned, Maragakis previously had the best relations with him. And as far as the party representatives are concerned, apart from the MP's representative (who was also my son's primary school teacher), the others were also known by Maragakis and had worked with them from time to time, such as with the representative of Sy.Riz.A., Drakontaidis, whom I also met at the meetings of the Ecological Initiative in the 1990s and today he is also the mayor of Lefkada. At that event the priest left before I spoke, but he accepted from me a CD with material about the gypsies and wished us to find a solution to their problem, before he left due to "obligations".

At this event by the members of Amnesty I was not the only one to speak. But I was the only one who had done a full paper on the benefits provided by the law for the gypsies as a vulnerable group of the population, and so my proposal was keynote speech by Amnesty. Among the audience, the one who was most disturbed was the mayor, perhaps because he was more sensitive. He was annoyed because, until that

time the European Union had given enough money to Greece for the housing and health care of the gypsies, but the municipality of Lefkada had never claimed some of that money, to relocate the gypsies who remained and they still remain next to the garbage dump. For this money and for the measures that the government had taken for the benefit of the gypsies, they, in Lefkada, had not heard anything. And I was the one who spoke about it. It was natural for the mayor to be annoyed. Anyway, at that time, the deadline for the municipality to claim money for the gypsies had passed and not only were the gypsies not relocated but the municipal council, in its meeting, decided to house them deeper inside the dump and next to the biological sewage treatment facilities of Lefkada, where the smell was unbearable and their children, if they played on the dirt road that led there, would be in danger from the vacuum trucks that every now and then emptied their cargo at these facilities. They would be in danger, because the dirt road was both narrow and the only road that would connect the gypsy resettlement area with the city. Fortunately the decision to relocate them was never made. If it had been carried out we would have had a burden on our conscience because, instead of doing good to the Gypsies by dealing with them, we would have done them harm. Finally, there was another attempt by the municipality to evict them from the place where they lived, next to the dump, by emptying the garbage right next to their shacks. But it also failed, because the gypsies called our colleague Katerina Vlachodimou and she went to the gypsy camp and called the police. The mayor was sought, found and persuaded to order the garbage trucks to stop emptying the garbage right next to the shacks.

As I do for the other initiatives I took in my life that did not succeed, such as e.g. the effort to stay abroad permanently, I do not regret making the Action Team of Amnesty International in Lefkada to deal with the gypsies. We saw first hand how badly our unfortunate fellow citizens live, that racism keeps them excluded from the rest of society and they cannot provide even the basics. They at least met some people who really showed solidarity with them for their terrible problems. In short, they saw that they were not alone in Lefkada and that not all Greeks are racist. I will never forget the grandfather, Kostas Kamperis, whom the gypsies had as their representative because they were all his relatives, who, when I had gone with a journalist from the newspaper "Ta kala nevia" of Lefkada, to interviewed them, and she did a police questioning, with the result that I got pissed off and got up to leave, he had come out with his wife from their shack and was begging me to come back. Then I realized that I was really on their side and they understood that. The battle, i.e. morally I had won it, but not materially either, since I was never able to help improve, even slightly, their living conditions. And when, years later, I was crossing the main street of Lefkada, on my bicycle, and a kid, who remembered me from when I visited the gypsy camp, called me with my name, on the one hand I was

moved because some people remembered me as one of their own, but on the other I felt great bitterness because, this man of theirs, in the long run only managed to make "a hole in the water". As I managed with the trafficked women.

The "dress rehearsal" of the Golden Dawn's attempt to dominate the center of the country's capital and the absence of anarchists from the counter-demonstration with which the "dress rehearsal" was addressed

It may be that the efforts for a better society did not find the necessary support from the public to succeed, but the efforts for a worse society were becoming more and more popular in Greece at that time. Nationalism, racism, sexism, thuggery, deception, hypocrisy, lying and above all violence were adopted by more and more Greeks, with the consequence that the time came when the party that embraced and promoted all these, the former numerically insignificant "Golden Dawn", to be massed so that, on the day when the victory against Nazism was celebrated throughout Europe (9theMay) this party chose to make a show of power in the center of the country's capital, in Omonia square. Of course, without the protection of the police, which is distinguished by the many voters of "Golden Dawn" that it has in its bosom, "Golden Dawn" could not hold a rally, since there were more anti- fascists, who did not want the rally of the "Golden Dawn" in Omonia, by the Nazis who finally gathered. It also couldn't hold a rally if the anti-fascists who had gathered to stop the Nazis from rallying felt like clashing with the police who were protecting the Nazis. However, they did not have such an appetite and that is why, as long as the "Golden Dawn" gathering lasted, they limited themselves to shouting slogans. And that was the least of it. They let the Nazis attack immigrants and refugees as well, after they finished their provocative rally unhindered.

Specifically, at that time, a multi-storey building on Sokratous Street, which used to be a hotel, later the Court of Appeal, and was then abandoned, was occupied by immigrants and refugees, who used it as a residence. Because of the racist policy of the Nazis, it was very likely that after the end of their gathering, they would attack to the immigrants at the former Court of Appeal. That is why some organizations, such as the Youth Against Racism, had called for the immigrants to be guarded, in the event that they would be attacked by the Nazis. Few they responded to the invitation, but Sophia and I responded. Previously, before we went outside the former Court of Appeal, we had gone to an anti-fascist gathering of anti-authoritarians and anarchists, which took place in Kaningos Square, and its organizers had planned to direct, after the end of the gathering, those gathered in Omonia, to clash with the Nazis. But, instead of directing them to Omonia, after some destruction of ATMs that caused the intervention of the police, they were directed to the Polytechnic University (N.T.U.A.), in Patision. There they forced their entrance and stayed, as long as the

Nazi gathering lasted. So the only anti-fascists who did not react to the Nazi show of force that day were the anti-authoritarians and anarchists, with exceptions that could be counted on the fingers of one hand, such as me, Sophia and another friend and comrade of ours, Vangelis.

As expected, the fascists, after the end of their rally, armed with police shields, police helmets and police clubs, in addition to iron fists, chains and other such weapons, headed towards the former Court of Appeal. Before they arrived, they drove away about a hundred anti-fascists, including members of the Network for the Defense of Political and Social Rights, who were blocking their way. I, together with a few anti- fascists, such as Vangelis, and the well-known anti-racist Thanasis Kourkoulas with some of his companions, followed the immigrants who ran to hide in the Court of Appeal, which was only accessible from the back, where one of the railing's bars fencing the yard had been removed. From this point, after us, the armed Nazis of the "Golden Dawn" attempted to enter the courtyard of the former Court of Appeals, with the intention to beat us to a pulp. But they didn't succeed because, as long as they tried, they were bombarded with stones and pieces of marble, thrown at them by the immigrants and some of their supporters, like me. They also threw stones and pieces of marble at us but they were fewer than us. The police, of course, left them free to beat to a pulp any immigrant or anti-fascist they wanted and that's why they didn't intervene. All it did was protect a large group of fascists, who had gathered at the front of the former Court of Appeal, i.e. on Socrates Street. From there the fascists, behind a line of riot policemen, were throwing stones at us. We at them couldn't throw anything without hitting the cops instead of them, because they had the cops ahead of them. In short, the cops not only did not prevent the fascists from committing crimes, but they also protected them from the anti-fascists. They also prevented the immigrants who lived in the former Court of Appeal from returning to the area where they lived, which was attacked by the "Golden Dawn" with the tolerance and even protection from the police. At that time, I confess that I also threw stones at the fascists who were throwing stones at us and trying to invade the courtyard of the former Court of Appeal to drench us in blood. I think I did very well, because not only was I in legal defense, but I was also defending the immigrants that "Golden Dawn" wanted to drench in blood. Of course, if in the end the Nazis were not able to invade, this is due to the immigrants themselves, because their Greek supporters, as I said before, could be counted on one hand. While the anarchists I hoped for, were entirely absent, except ourselves and a few others.

This absence of the anarchists and the way it was achieved reminded me of the anti-fascist march that had taken place from Kypseli square, fourteen years earlier, after the attempted assassination of the squatter Stathopoulos, which I have mentioned above. And then the target was the offices of "Golden Dawn" but after the outbreak of unjustified incidents, the demonstrators, instead of trying to go to

the offices of "Golden Dawn", went, as I said, to Panteio university and continued the riots on Syngrou Avenue! From what I understood from that too, the day the anarchists left the immigrants uncovered, in the milieu of the anarchist rioters there is no personal initiative and the rioters are easily swayed by the organizers of a demonstration, or those organized in more widely known groups.

Apart from that, what the fascists did not achieve that day, i.e. forcing the immigrants to evacuate the former Court of Appeal, the police achieved shortly after, blocking all access to it. Consequently anyone who came out to go to work or simply to look for food and water, was not able to come back. And as if this were not enough, for their reaction against the gathering of the Nazis some leaders of leftist organizations were prosecuted, such as Savvas Matsas of the Revolutionary Workers' Party, whose case even reached the audience of the court. In contrast, none of the fascists or their leaders were prosecuted for their attack on the former Court of Appeal, from which we could have mourned victims.

Golden Dawn's police-unmolested attack on the presentation of the Greek-Macedonian dictionary in the of Foreign Press Correspondents Union's hall

Before a month had passed since that day when the fascists attacked us, they reappeared menacingly in front of me in the Hall of Foreign Press Correspondents, at the Academias' street, where the Greek-Macedonian dictionary was being presented. Two university professors also participated in this presentation, namely a Dutch woman who taught at the University of Thessaly and an American, a famous linguist. Also Parisis from the Macedonian minority, head of the Greek department of the European Office for Least Spoken Languages, and also the well-known anti-nationalist writer Dimitris Lithoxou. Also Pavlos Voskopoulos (Filipov) representative of the party of the Macedonian minority of Greece "Rainbow". All these respectable intellectuals it saw fit to terrorize the rising "Golden Dawn," and to that end it sent a group of some twenty fascists armed with clubs and helmets, led by the considered deputy leader of the "Golden Dawn", Ilias Panagiotaros. The police, which had been tasked with protecting the presentation from a possible fascist attack, when they came, had left in order to leave the field free for them. But there must have been an agreement between the police and the fascists not to hit anyone, otherwise it cannot be explained the fact that they limited themselves to tearing the banner of the event, cursing us, asking us to vacate the hall and, when they saw that we didn't obey (except for one, Amnesty International executive Dionysis Gousetis), to leave. After they left the police reappeared and the book launch continued. After the event, the speakers and a few others, including me and Sophia, went to the Rosalia Tavern in Exarchia, where Sophia and I had the opportunity to meet Lithoxou in person, who told us that he knew about our imprisonment during 1978-1981 and that he had supported us.

Unfortunately, this was the first and last time we saw him in person.

Golden Dawn with the protection of the police breaks up a large anti-fascist demonstration and proves that it is here to stay

After almost two months, on the 7th of July, the fascists made another show of strength by dispersing with the help of the police a large anti-fascist demonstration headed towards their stronghold, the area of Agios Panteleimon in Acharnon street, where they had organized a new gathering. I remember that more than a thousand people participated in this anti-fascist march, and among them there were some determined to clash with the fascists. But as soon as they reached the place where the fascists had gathered and tried to approach them, the fascists together with the police attacked the anti-fascist demonstrators and dispersed them. I did not expect such a large demonstration to be disbanded so easily. That's why, when it broke up, I felt how weak the anti-fascist movement is. Of course, the riot did not stop after the breakup of the march but continued in front of the University of Economics. But these riots were like the riots of fanatical fans after a football match, not a clash with the fascists. The fascists were left unscathed again. Me, walking outside the University of Economics and seeing some small fires on the street, all I thought was that I was dealing with a theater of revolution and not a serious confrontation with the fascists and the police that protected them.

The anti-racist event of the Amnesty International's Lefkada Action Group at the Labor Center of the city

At the end of that year I was back in Lefkada, where with the Action Group of Amnesty International we decided to hold an event during the Christmas days at the Labor Center of the city. I had a DVD with some videos about the immigrant struggles, I suggested we show it and my suggestion was approved. Unfortunately, we gathered only a few people and all of them were not Lefkadians but people from other places who happened to live in Lefkada. We had only two Lefkadians at this event and they were my friends, Kostas and Dionysis. After all, Kostas Messinis was one of the founding members of the Lefkada Action Group. Apart from them, some gypsies had also come, whom Maragakis had brought from their camp by his car. That was the last time we did anything like Amnesty International's Lefkada Action Group. Maragakis may have continued to have some contacts with the gypsies and supported them in some bureaucratic matters, but we as a collective ceased to function more or less. Although during our operation Maragakis did not show particular respect for collective decision-making and, many times, acted alone,

representing our collective without asking us, as when he gave an interview to a Lefkada newspaper, I don't think that our collective subsided because of him. I believe that it followed the fate of the Lefkada Autonomous Initiative, i.e. most of its members somehow became disillusioned, tired and stopped working with it.

The attempt to organize the anti-fascist forces of the Western Greece and its meager results

I don't remember exactly when my political collaboration with the Agrinio comrades, which I mention above, started, i.e. if it was in 2009 or 2010, I do remember, however, that an attempt was made to set up a coordinating body for the anti-racist and anti-fascist groups and initiatives of the West of Greece, as was done in 2006 or 2007. In the context of this effort, we met with comrades in Nafpaktos and Agrinio, in university campuses or in TE.I. I used to go to Agrinio by bus and if the meeting was taking place outside Agrinio, I was going there in the car of my friends. In these meetings I had also brought my friend from Lefkada and, the last time, the Turkish political refugee I had brought to Lefkada to find a job and he had found it. We were gathering around twenty people, most of whom were students. The discussions lasted several hours and revolved around the political character of the coordinaton initiative. A student of Albanian origin also participated in them, who, to my great pleasure, agreed with my own views. I remember he was called Lawrence, because he said that he is not Lawrence of Arabia (an English intelligence officer, who starred in the revolt of the Arab nobles against the Ottoman Empire, and his life was made into a famous movie) but Lawrence of Albania. I had last seen Lawrence at a demonstration in Ioannina, which I will talk about below, and from him I learned about the Zeitgeist movement. Now for the result of our efforts, I have to admit that it has been disappointing. In our last meeting we had agreed to publish a brochure, which we would distribute outside the high schools of Nafpaktos, Agrinio and Lefkada, where we would denounce the role of the school in spreading nationalism and racism. In fact, after a fierce dispute I had with some students, it was agreed not to attribute nationalism and racism to capitalism, since they are not exclusively economic phenomena. I was also supported in this point of view by the Turkish political refugee, who, to the argument of my opponents that we should write things acceptable to the majority of the world, in order to get closer to them, he had objected that this was what they had done in Turkey, with the consequence the movement which was created not to have the characteristics that its protagonists had sought but the characteristics its followers wanted. In other words, it had lost its identity. Unfortunately, as I said before, the end result was disappointing: Nothing happened. It was heard that there was a rift between students and non-students as

well as between representatives of Nafpaktos, one of whom was the heart of the initiative. When he disagreed with the others and stopped leading the initiative, the initiative was abandoned by the Nafpaktians. I, however, did not want so much work that we had done to go to waste, and I convinced the Agrinians to produce a poster, at least, with what we had agreed upon, some of which were also my own suggestions. So a big yellow anti-racist poster came out, which mentioned some racist incidents of Western Greece and attacked the racists with harsh words. It was posted in Agrinio and Lefkada and I hope also in Nafpaktos. In Lefkada, in order to post it, I had asked the help of Agrinians, and with their help several posters were posted in the center of the city. They stayed in place for at least a month, because we posted them in the heart of winter. I don't know if they had any effect, but I remember that later, in an anti- racist documentary that was shown in the Navarino Self-Governed Park, I saw this poster, along with other anti-racist posters, and I was very happy.

The poster that was the fruit of our organizational efforts

My efforts to "bring anti-nationalism" to Volos – The anti-specist event in the Matsangou squat

The fact that I cooperated with the comrades of Western Greece does not mean that I did not try to take advantage of the opportunities that were given to me for my cooperation with the comrades of Volos, where my daughter was studying. In this context, I tried to organize an anti-nationalist event in the Matsangou squat with the Macedonian minority member of our Anti-Nationalist Movement Pavlos Voskopoulos as speaker. But I didn't succeed because, as one Helen had reacted to the squat of Acharnon and Hayden, now a red-haired female comrade reacted, who didn’t want to admit in the "house", as she called the Matsangou squat, someone who had appeared on television. And Voskopoulos had appeared on television whenever he had the opportunity to defend the rights of Greece's Macedonian minority. This comrade's opinion prevailed and I was finaly unable to organize an anti-nationalist event. This does not mean, of course, that all those who have participated in events in the Matsangou squat have not appeared on television. But they were "more equal than equal", like the pigs in Orwell's "Animal Farm", where equality prevails among the animals and yet the pigs rule because they are "more equal" than others.

Nevertheless I should be contended that my daughter, along with two others, sometime managed to organize an animal rights event in Matsangou, where a documentary about Jill Phipps was shown and then spoke a friend of hers, who was touring the world and giving lectures about her struggle and about animal rights in general. In the discussion that followed, I disagreed with him in the "unmitigated" condemnation of meat-eating, pointing out that in the prehistory humans had been hunters, apart from foragers, something to which he could not object. With this remark I substantiate my point that meat eating is something normal for humans.

The anti-fascist counter-gathering in Larissa and the occupation of the Medical School of the University of Thessaly

I may not have been able to take advantage, as I should have, of the opportunities for events offered by the Matsangou squat, but I took advantage of its interventions in anti-fascist and anti-racist mobilizations in other cities. So on February 22, 2010, I found myself, like a dozen others from the squat, in Larissa, where a counter-demonstration against a demonstration planned by the fascists was to take place, in a city square, where a bust of the fascist politician and military officer Grivas had been erected. He was the leader of the terrorist organization X during the German occupation (1941-1944) and the founder of the nationalist Cypriot organization EOKA, whose victims were many communists, Turkish Cypriots and a few English.

Initially, we gathered at the Medical School of the University of Thessaly, where the Social Disorder Virus (I.K.A.) squat was housed on the ground floor. From there we went to the square with the statue of Grivas and settled down to prevent the fascists from coming. Time was passing and fascists were not coming, that's why some people wanted to leave. In order not to leave without any slogans being written, I convinced someone from the Matsangou squat and he wrote some anti-racist and anti-fascist slogans on the bust of Grivas and in some other places.

The bust of Grivas after its "decoration" by the anti-fascist protesters.

But before we left, a van with two fascists parked near the square and this had the result that a large group of masked anti-fascists rushed at them and beat them badly, due to the fact that in the van were found clubs. The victims of the attack went away covered in blood and after a while the police arrived. With the arrival of the police, the anti-fascists, after shouting some slogans, ran to shut themselves in the Medical School. At that time, even though my daughter was one of the last anti-fascists to leave, I did not stay with the last but ran to escape through the alleys. Anyway, my daughter and I found ourselves back inside the Medical School occupied by the hunted anti-fascist protesters. The police did not enter the School, due to student asylum, but they were stationed outside for several hours, as a result of which the anti-fascists were locked inside and the fascists, as we learned, gathered in the square, as they had planned, and made their march. At least while we were "besieged" a text was written, which was recited from the upstairs windows of the School with a loudspeaker, and I managed to the call the anti-authoritarian internet radio 98FM and get a comrade from Matsangou on the air, to describe the situation. Before the cops left, some people tried to get us out, so the cops wouldn't come in

and arrest us. They were guaranteeing our safety since they had received such a promise from the police. At the meeting that was held to see what we would do, I was against our exit and this led to a fierce dispute with a left-wing lawyer who had done the negotiations with the police. I got into the dispute because she was talking too bad about those who didn't want to come out. From this event, some people remembered me later when they saw me again in other mobilizations. They told me that I was right and I had done very well to scold the lawyer. And indeed I was right, because after several hours the cops left and we were able to leave. Two cars had come from Volos. With them, the anti-fascists returned to Volos without anyone being caught, although the police stopped one of the cars and searched it. They found nothing. I, together with a beautiful eighteen-year-old girl from Kalavryta, returned with the long-distance bus, as I had come. I can't say that while the girl and I were waiting for the bus, I wasn't worried about the cops coming and picking us up from the intercity bus station.

The police outside the building of the Medical School of Larissa, where we took refuge in order not to get arrested.

The efforts of the anti-fascist movement of Larissa, to stop the awarding of honors to the far-right anti-communist and anti-turkish Grivas, did not end with this mobilization. They continued until the time came when the bust of Grivas left its pedestal. Its disappearance was attributed to the anarchists of Larissa.

AGAIN ABROAD AND MY ANTI-NATIONALIST STRUGGLE

At the age of 54, I visit the most tolerant European capital of the 60s, a magnet for libertarians everywhere: Amsterdam

This year, 2010, will be unforgettable to me not only because I found myself with my daughter at the forefront of the anti-fascist struggle in Thessaly but, above all, because I came out of Greece again after twelve years spent imprisoned in Greece for economic reasons, after my return to it from Milan in 1998. Having found myself with money, after so many years when, financially speaking, I was always below zero (in debt), I did not forget that, already since I was a teenager, I dreamed to live abroad. And although now such an issue no longer came up, since my children were studying in Greece and the money I had was not enough to rent three houses (I was already paying rent for the house in Athens and the house in Volos), I did not intend to die before I leave this country again and, in fact, before I visit Paris, which I dreamed of visiting since I was a child. So, already in the spring of 2010, in addition to the trips I made, when I visited my daughter in Volos, as in Skiathos, I arranged to travel to the Netherlands, to Amsterdam, together with my friend and comrade Vangelis. I chose Amsterdam as the destination of my first trip abroad after so long, because I wanted to get to know the European capital that had a reputation for the freedom it ensured to its citizens, such as the free use of Indian hemp. I had also learned that in 1970 it was considered the epicenter of the hippie movement in Europe.

Our trip took some postponements until we were sure that the weather would be suitable and we would not get into cold and rains. We overdid it, however, because we finally ended up in Amsterdam in July and in fact on the days when the anti-racist festival was taking place in Athens, which I didn't want to miss. Fortunately, that year, my colleagues at the Anti-Nationalist Movement from the Macedonian and the Turkish minorities, honored our bench with their presence, so my absence was not felt. In fact, when our colleague at the Anti-Nationalist Movement, Alexia, who later became the secretary of the Greek section of Amnesty International, called me and found me in Amsterdam, I was happy because, until then, she was the only one who went abroad every once in a while. I was glad because she would see that I was not so poor to be imprisoned for the rest of my life in Greece. I never liked being pitied by others. And I consider it almost certain that, those who "go around the world", look with pity at those trapped in their countries.

Of course, this time, I would not go abroad either by bus or by boat. I had suffered enough in my previous journeys, regardless of whether these hardships were accompanied by the opportunity to see many European cities, if only by passing through them. So we went by plane and because we took the cheapest one we could find and changed plane at Prague and at Frankfurt (from where we passed because in Prague we missed the one that would lead us directly to Amsterdam), we arrived

in Amsterdam at night. From the airport we went to the central train station and from there by taxi to the hotel. This hotel had paintings by the famous Dutch painter Van Gogh in every corridor and in every room and we ended up in a room with his Sunflowers painting, if I remember correctly.

Amsterdam's torture museum

We didn't stay long in Amsterdam, because Vangelis didn't have enough money with him and after six days he decided to leave. But while we stayed we walked it quite a bit and got a taste of it, because we didn't just walk it but, on my own initiative, we also visited its sights. And I say on my own initiative because Vangelis later confided in me that he didn't usually visit museums. As usual, I tried, while I stayed in Amsterdam, to visit as many as possible. Only the museum dedicated to Van Gogh I did not visit because, although I knew the tragic story of this painter, I never liked his paintings. I always found them very naive. But I visited a museum of instruments of torture which, like the one in Milan, left me with very strong memories. Seeing the instruments of torture used by the church and the state against their opponents, if you have a little humanity in you, it is enough to hate forever those institutions whose brutality and cruelty exceeded all limits in the course of history. And, as it emerged from information boards posted in the museum, these tortures continue in most countries of the world, only with different instruments of torture, which leave little, if any, marks, such as the electric shock. With such means that the state and the church had at their disposal, it is not surprising that they succeeded and were imposed, despite the injustice, the lie and the violence that characterizes them. I don't think I would be able to withstand such torture as was done with such instruments of torture. In fact, from what I know, these instruments of torture were not only used to extract confessions and information, but also for painful executions. These executions were so gruesome and so torturous for their victims that they terrified anyone who watched them. And, as far as I know, they were held in public and seen by many people. In fact, the victims were usually completely innocent and were persecuted only because they served as scapegoats for the general resentment against religious and state oppression. Such victims were Jews, Gypsies, heretics and old women, hundreds of thousands of whom were burned alive as witches (not to say that many young women were not also burned). Almost all victims, after gruesome torture with torture devices like the ones I saw in Milan and Amsterdam, they confessed whatever the priests and judges wanted. In fact, priests and judges were so sadistic that they delighted in terrorizing their victims with the fear of eternal torture in the Christian hell, so that they could secure from them an admission and then forgiveness of their "sins" by some priest, before the moment of execution. Knowing that their victims were innocent, and that whatever they had

confessed, they had confessed it under torture, they were entertained by the unjustifiable fear of the hell they were causing to them, and of the ridicule to which they were subjected, by accepting " remission of sins' before the execution, having no sins. I don't think priests and judges believed in an afterlife, because, being aware of how criminal they were, if they believed in an afterlife, they would know that they would surely end up in hell for their crimes. This would prevent them from indulging in this orgy of lies and violence. Anyway, although many years have passed since the particular instruments of torture I saw are not in use, the tortures done with the approval of the judges and the tolerance of the priests continue. And they always continue in the knowledge of the judges and the priests that many times, when it comes to e.g. for political offences, they are done to innocent people. Which means that, as then as now, priests and judges "don't have their God" and that's why they don't fear any hell, for what they do.

A reliable picture of the lifestyle of the progressive bourgeoisie

Another museum that impressed me in Amsterdam was a typical three-story house of those that line the city's canals, and were once the residences of the wealthy merchants who formed the backbone of the city's economy. From this house that had been turned into a museum, I got a reliable taste of the lifestyle of the bourgeoisie, which in Europe, hundreds of years ago, managed to successfully compete with the Catholic Church and the landowners and introduce into society human-centered institutions and traditions, such as parliamentary democracy, religious tolerance (the Netherlands had long been a haven for Jews), human-centered art as opposed to religion-centered art, and the free development of science. Especially in painting the Dutch painters of the 15th and the 16th century they focused on man, introducing landscapes and the daily life of people as dominant themes in painting, and abandoning the religious themes that had been dominant in Western painting until then. They managed to do this, because their employers were the merchants and artisans, i.e. the rising middle class at the time, and not the priests. It is only natural, after all this that visiting such a house, as the one we visited, is for me an experience that I recommend to anyone visiting the Netherlands. Thus he will come into more direct contact with the history of those who, with their money, wrested Europe from religious obscurantism, which was imposing God as the center of life, and they opened the way for the development of the arts and sciences. Of these arts and sciences whose works we now enjoy. Even those who are not interested in either the arts or the sciences enjoy their works, since sciences, such as medicine, are now directly connected to everyone's life.

Rembrandt Square and the shops where Indian hemp is sold

I imagine that the reader of these lines will have no doubt that we also visited the shops in Amsterdam, where cigarettes made from Indian hemp are sold. After all, to the general public of Greece, Holland is better known for them. Fortunately many of these are clustered around a central square, Rembrandt Square, where many street painters congregate and, at least in the summer, various street artists perform. We went to this square more than twice and even Vangelis, who didn't drink alcohol, drank an Amstel draught beer there with me. Although 5 euros for a beer seemed a lot to me, I didn't want to leave Amsterdam without testing the Dutch beer named after the river Amstel, which runs through the city and gave it its name (Amsterdam means dam on the river Amstel). Especially when I used to drink this beer in Greece until then. It happened, in fact, that on the day we drank the beer, a lot of football-loving people had gathered in this square, because they had installed big screens in it and were broadcasting on them one of the two semi-final matches for some football "cup", pan-European or world, due to the fact that the Dutch national football team played in it. In the end, the Netherlands, who were playing, I think, with Germany, did not qualify, but Spain from the other semi-final did, and the Dutch were celebrating. I explained this by the fact that before independence the Netherlands belonged to Spain and therefore the Dutch felt an affinity towards the Spanish. Finally, in this square I was also given the opportunity to see how the police disperse the crowds. I saw this when, after the broadcast of the football match had ended, the football fans filling the square were confronted by a wall of horses ridden by uniformed policemen, some of whom were women. The cops directed the horses into the crowd and the crowd was forced to evacuate the square to avoid being attacked. Even today in Greece the police do not use such methods. They always resort to tear gas, as if they want to consume as much as they can, to buy new canisters of tear gas and thus and benefit those who collect the bribes as intermediaries in these sales.

A good bus driver – A 'sterile European capital'

Another thing I won't forget from Amsterdam is the kindness of a bus driver, we had taken one night to go back to our hotel and it was the last of the line with the consequence, when it got to the end of the route, the driver finished his shift. The bus had not passed by our hotel, as we had hoped, with the consequence that we found ourselves that night in an unknown part of the city and without a cell phone to call a taxi. The driver got us out of the dead end, who told us to get back on the bus, from where we got off, and take us with it to our hotel. A Greek bus driver

would never do something like that for some foreign immigrants. We may not have been immigrants in the Netherlands, something the driver didn't know, but we were from Greece, as we told him, and we know that Greece in Western Europe is considered the East, just like Turkey, i.e. a more or less underdeveloped country compared to Western European countries. But there is also something positive about today's bus drivers in Athens that was not the case for Amsterdam drivers back then. The drivers of Amsterdam were sitting near the machine that validate the tickets and watched whether people validated them or not. So one night when we took a tram and I didn't validate the ticket, the driver yelled at me and wouldn't start the tram until I validated my ticket.

Another thing I also didn't like about Amsterdam was that there were no beggars or stray animals anywhere. I guess stray animals have been taken off the streets and killed by the state many years ago, as was the case in Milan, while beggars are immediately arrested by the police. I met only one beggar in Amsterdam and he was walking in the streets of the city, not sitting somewhere. However, there were many street musicians... I also assume that those who have nothing to eat will certainly find in Amsterdam some institutions that distribute free food to the hungry. Here, such institutions can be found even in Athens, such as the Homeless Reception Center of the Municipality of Athens. Finally, I suppose that Amsterdam has shelters for the homeless. Even Milan had such institutions, as early as 1996, when I was hosted in one of them. And the Dutch welfare state is better organized than Italy's.

Anyway, Amsterdam is a beautiful, clean and well-kept city, where one is happy to live. It has nothing to do with Athens, which is not only the ugliest capital in Europe, as noted by the famous journalist Oriana Fallaci, but also, probably, the dirtiest. Ruins, homeless people camping at the permanently closed doors of public and private buildings, garbage that is slow to collect, cars and motorbikes that park wherever they want, and other such "nice" sights, make Athens look more like the capital of a poor African or Asian country , rather than as a European capital. Woe to those who forced to spend almost their entire lives in Athens. I, fortunately, was not one of them.

Before leaving Amsterdam, we didn't miss a boat ride in its canals, which characterize the city, just as Venice is characterized by its canals. But there is a difference between the canals of Venice and the canals of Amsterdam: In the canals of Venice there are boats that serve the people of the city as public transport, because no other means of transport can run in that city, while in the canals of Amsterdam there are only boats for tourists, as the locals go wherever they want by public transport. At least those who don't go everywhere by bike, because there are many of them. Anyway, during the whole boat ride, I took videos with my video camera, in order to "take with me" all this beauty. Result: When I returned to Greece, I found that I had lost the videotape, so I took nothing with me, as I won't take when

I die. Lesson: Don't postpone for the future the enjoyment of the present, because the future is unknown.

It was certainly not at all pleasant for me that I would be returning to Greece only after 6 days abroad and that is why I thought of extending my stay a little longer, taking advantage of the fact that from Amsterdam I could go by train in a few hours in Paris, which I dreamed of going to all my life. As for Vangelis who had no money for a hotel, I thought of taking him with me and paying for a twin room instead of a single, since the difference in the prices of single rooms from the prices of twin rooms was small. So, after waiting in line at the central train station for some hours, we managed to get tickets to Paris a day earlier than the departure date. While waiting for tickets, I felt sorry for those traveling with the open youth ticket, the well-known Interrail. There was a special queue for them and only a few people were served every hour, so each of them had to wait for many hours to get to the ticket office. I believe there was purpose in this excessive delay, in order to discourage those young people who want to use their open ticket on such a popular route as Amsterdam-Paris, and be forced to use a regular ticket, thus enriching the company that exploits the relevant trains.

It's time to realize a big dream of mine: To visit Paris

Under such circumstances, life led me to Paris to realize, finally, a big dream of mine. When I was in Milan and passing through the central train station to catch a train to another city, my eyes always fell on the train that would go to Paris. I never had enough money to buy a ticket and I stayed always with the bitterness of the unfulfilled dream. Now I was with Vangelis on the train to Paris and crossing Belgium, whose capital I would have visited in 1998, invited by the organizers of the meeting for the 250th anniversary of the end of the Thirty Years' War, had I not fallen victim to the tax authorities of Greece, as I described above. I had no intention, however, of getting off at the penultimate station before Paris and turning back, as someone did who did not want to stop dreaming of Paris, according to a very cute Greek poem. So, on an extremely hot afternoon with a temperature of 33 degrees Celsius, I ended up with Vangelis in a room on the fifth floor of an old hotel in the Place d'Italie in Paris, which, unfortunately, had no air conditioning. And by the time I found out where they were selling fans in the neighborhood, the days had passed and I had spent some of the hottest nights of my life in Paris. Unfortunately we had to sleep with the windows closed, because the street below had a lot of traffic even at night and that's why the noise was great. At least from the balcony of our room we had a very nice view, because the buildings of the center of Paris are extremely beautiful.

Translated from Greek to English - www.onlinedoctranslator.com

As soon as we arrived in Paris and left our things at the hotel, I suggested to Vangelis that we should go see the most famous sight: the cathedral known to me as "Notre-Dame de Paris" about which, when I was young, I had read the homonymous book by Victor Hugo. We did go and surprisingly there wasn't a long line to get in and we did. But it was late afternoon and it was getting dark and its managers didn't turn on any lights inside for us to see, so we couldn't see anything. I'm sure they did it on purpose to feel that they are some very important people since they have authority over such a famous temple and can disappoint its visitors who come from all parts of the world. At least, from a machine that sells commemorative medals that you find in every major landmark building in Paris, I got a medal with Notre-Dame de Paris, so that I can say, for the rest of my life, that I have visited this attraction. And, just before we left for Greece, I went back with Vangelis and took a video of the temple from the outside, because, to get back inside, I would have to wait hours in the huge line I found in the courtyard of the temple.

In the Louvre museum from the "back" door – The Mona Lisa painting of Da Vinci target of hundreds who want to be photographed with it but despise the other paintings!

It must have been my second day in Paris, the day I visited with Vangelis the other most famous attraction of Paris: The Louvre museum which is one of the largest in the world. Fortunately, the receptionist at the hotel we were staying at, wanted to serve us and told us which door of the Louvre to enter the museum from, if we didn't want to wait hours in line to enter from the main one. Before we got to the Louvre, as we were walking by the river that runs through Paris, the Sikouanas, as the Greeks call it badly, a woman approached me and showed me a supposedly gold ring that she had "found" behind us. I told her that I hadn't dropped anything and that the ring wasn't mine but she persisted. I had a difficult time trying to avoid her. Of course I understood from the beginning that she was hoping that I would keep the ring and give her some change as a reward for "finding it for me". At least the door recommended by the receptionist didn't have a queue so we entered the Louvre straight away. Of course, we didn't enter the first room, but that didn't stop us from going out into the courtyard of the museum with the well-known glass pyramid and heading towards the first room, as it was presented on the map of the museum. I don't remember if we saw the rooms in order, but I remember that at some point Vangelis got tired of following me and left, saying that he would wait for me after some time in the courtyard of the museum. . He certainly didn't see as many exhibits as I did, but I can't say I saw them all either. This museum is very large and one day is not enough to go around it. Of course I sought out the museum's most famous painting, Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa, also known as the

Gioconda. When I found it I found a kind of delirium possessed by a large crowd of visitors who had come to see it: They were all huddled at a distance of several meters from the painting, behind a red string, which created a "dead zone" around the painting, and they were trying to photograph it or to photograph themselves with it as a background. A guard who monitored the "integrity" of the red cord completed the humiliating, for these visitors, image they gave to the onlookers like me. The room, where the Mona Lisa painting was walled in and behind thick glass, had other important paintings by great painters, none of which attracted the attention of the crowd. So I was given the opportunity to observe them myself in peace and close up.

Another exhibit that I searched for in this museum was "The Venus of Milos", a marble copy from the Hellenistic period of a very fine statue of the classical era of Greek antiquity, which has been lost. I didn't find it at all. I found only one headless statue known as "The Victory of Samothrace". Of course, this museum had a lot of statues from ancient Greece and ancient Rome at its possession, but I was least interested in them, because I have had enough of them from Greek museums. So I mainly looked for exhibits from the Renaissance era onwards. Unfortunately, there were so many that, from one point on, in order to see as many exhibits as possible, I passed in front of them with only a quick glance, and after several hours of walking I went and found Vangelis in the courtyard of the museum . From there we left and, unfortunately, we did not go to this museum again, while we stayed in Paris.

We accidentally end up in the most famous palace in Europe: The palace of Versailles

We did, however, go to other museums, such as the Cluny museum, where Vangelis, who did not think he should spend all his time in Paris seeing museums, complained to me about my passion for museums, confiding to me that he did not usually go to museums and that the only reason he came to them was because I pushed him. Then I told him that, under such circumstances, there was no need for him to come with me. But he kept coming and so we also visited the Musée d'Orsay, as well as the Pantheon. And purely by chance we found ourselves on a rainy day at the Palace of Versailles, which has also become a museum since the 19th century. And I say by chance, because we had taken the suburban railway to go to another museum, but we didn't get off at the right stop, so we decided to continue until the terminus, which was Versailles. The fact that it was a rainy day meant that there were no huge queues at the entrance of the palace, so we got in relatively quickly. And there weren't many people inside, so we saw the halls with some comfort. In the big hall of mirrors, we even stood in front of a mirror and took a picture of both of us in the mirror. This is one of the few photos we took together during the trip, maybe the only one.

Something I didn't know until I visited the palace of Versailles was that the king's bed, like the queen's bed (they slept in separate rooms far apart from each other), was behind low wooden bars in front of which, when the king or queen were awake, every day people gathered to see them and to submit various requests to him or to her. Knowing that the life of a king or queen was regulated by ritual down to its last details, I thought that the king or queen was obliged to put on a theater for their audience from the moment they got out of bed! That is, the bed behind the low wooden bars was a bed on a stage! However, the king who ordered this palace to be built, Louis XIV, he chose a good location for his bedroom: Right in the center of the palace facade, from where he could see who was entering and exiting the palace's central outer gate. In closing, I would like to note about the Palace of Versailles that, though the wealth and comforts experienced by France's most famous king, Louis XIV, were impressive his life would have been worse than mine (until today, at least) and many others, because in his time medicine was far behind and he lived to a long old age, without painkillers and everything else that medicine offers today. In old age, everyone needs doctors, and Louis would have had a special need for them, as he spent part of his last years in a wheelchair. Before he died, he had seen all his children and grandchildren die. He was succeeded by his great-grandson. And one more thing I recently learned about life in the palace of Versailles is that the people in it were not clean, as they are today, because the facilities for bathing were few and primitive, compared to those of today, and the people were used to dirt. For example, a noblewoman from among the entourage of the king and queen, if she felt like peeing, she would sit down and pee in the great hall of mirrors, without anyone protesting about it: They considered it natural!

The oldest palace in Paris that became its most famous prison and "hosted" the famous anarchist François Ravasol

Another day we also visited the oldest palace in Paris, known as the "Conciergerie", where death row inmates were imprisoned (and tortured) before their execution. It currently houses various public services, with the consequence that a minimal part of it is open to the public. Of this place, only its basements are of interest, where a dungeon has been fashioned as it was when Queen Marie Antoinette stayed in it before the French Revolution of 1789 cut off her head. In these basements there is also a panel with some personal belongings of the famous criminal on death row who declared himself an anarchist in court and defended his actions as consequences of his political choices: Ravassol. We were impressed, both me and Vangelis, by the importance that the French state has attributed to him. And Ravassol, before being led to the beheading, was locked up in the "Conciergerie".

Getting a taste of the circumstances of the anti-authoritarians in the center of Paris

During our trip, Vangelis had a tablet with him and, where there was free internet, he logged in to gather information about our trip and learn the news. So one day he found in the French Indimendia an event of anti-authoritarians that would take place in some closed space in some district of the city. We went to this event which was held near a square dedicated to the most famous Parisian singer of the past: Edith Piaf. By the time we arrived, however, the event was coming to an end and I had the brilliant idea, before sitting down to watch the event, to pop in and buy something to drink. When I came back the event was over. Fortunately, Vangelis had already met some of the organizers and when I came back, together with some others, we went to the house of a couple of the organizers. We didn't sit there long but then we ended up at another house that had a small back yard, where we sat with several others and had a drink. We talked a lot with our, let's say, like-minded people, since they spoke English comfortably, and we learned that in the center of Paris, which is also huge, there are no squats. In general, the picture they gave us of the anarchists of Paris was quite disappointing and, as if that wasn't enough, sometime, a woman from an apartment in the neighboring apartment building overlooking our yard shouted at us because she was bothered by the noise from the discussion! Because our companions told us to speak very quietly, so as not to disturb, I felt much suffocated in that environment. Anyway, this was the only contact we had with like-minded people during our trip.

Looking from above the city I dreamed of getting to know during my whole life

Another day we decided to go up the Montmartre hill, something we couldn't do with the Eiffel Tower because of the huge lines we would have to wait in, to get one of the elevators to the top. This hill is climbed by a cable car that starts from its base. In order to reach the cable car, we walked up several steps from the platform of the nearest Metro station, where we got off. But we were compensated for our inconvenience, because the view from the steps of the "Sacred Heart", the church on the top of the hill, is excellent. Almost all of Paris can be seen from up there. That is why these steps are every night full of people from all parts of the world. Some of the people also play various instruments and sing, so the evening passes very pleasantly. Especially if you also drink a few beers. Beers are sold by Arabs from the former French colonies, I suppose also grandchildren of those who came from Algeria, when Algeria still belonged to France. Vangelis, however, there too resisted

the "temptation" and did not drink any beer! I did not resist and drank, enjoying the view. And before we got off, we passed by a nearby square, where painters traditionally gather. From a tourist shop in this square, I bought four music boxes with music from songs by Edith Piaf. From another I also got the heavy alcoholic (57% alcohol) absinthe drink, which the painters of Paris used to drink. Until then, i.e. until the age of 54, I had not tested this drink. I tested it on the steps of the Sacred Heart church. Of course, from that height I shooted a long video of Paris, as if I could thus take it with me forever. Although I didn't take it, the image of Paris stretching out at my feet as far as the eye can see will always accompany me in those moments when life's difficulties make me forget that life has interesting and beautiful sides, not only ugly. After all, Paris will always be there to comfort me with the thought of it, when I am surrounded only by ugliness. Because that's how I feel many times when I'm in Athens.

And yet! There on the steps of Montmartre, Vangelis told me that he found that, after all, France does not deserve its reputation! This bothered me, because I was the one who I had invited him to Paris. I could not imagine that he would get nothing out of so much beauty, to the point of making me feel like I was pulling him against his will. When I asked him to tell me what he found negative about our stay in France, he had nothing to say. This attitude of his made me "curse" him never to set foot in France again!

I don't remember if Vangelis became disillusioned with France before or after we took two cruises on the river in Paris, one during the day and one during the night, at the suggestion of our hotel receptionist, who sold us the boat tickets. . I, however, did not regret these cruises, because, as the receptionist who sold me the tickets had told me, they were the shortest way to see, even from a distance, the beautiful buildings of the city, which surround her river. Since I had toured Amsterdam in the same way, I had come to the conclusion that it is not worth visiting a European capital with a navigable river and not touring it on a tourist boat. All European capitals must have navigable rivers running through them. Only Athens does not, which adds to its ugliness.

Our stay in Paris coincides with the celebration of the national holiday of the "homeland" of chauvinism: France

Another interesting thing, worth mentioning, is that during the days we were in Paris, it also happened to be the national holiday of France which is celebrated on July 14th. As part of the celebrations, on the eve of the 14th of July in the city's Place Vendôme, where a statue of Napoleon Bonaparte Ist stands at the top of a tens of meters column, dressed as if he were an ancient Roman senator, there was a big concert by

bands from various French-speaking countries in Africa and by French bands. Vangelis learned about it from the internet and so we also attended this concert, which wanted to convey the message that French are not only the white people who live in France from "grandfather to grandfather" but also French speakers and the bearers of French culture from the other continents. What impressed me from the concert is that most of the spectators who wanted to drink something, during the concert, drank wine and not beers, as concert spectators drink in Greece. Finally, this large crowd that attended the concert was dispersed after it ended by the police, in the same way that the crowd in Amsterdam's Rembrandt Square had been dispersed. That is, a barrage of mounted policemen and policewomen appeared and began to push the crowd out of the square. In the same way was dispersed the next day the crowd that had gathered to see the fireworks that, due to a national holiday, were thrown from the Eiffel Tower. Among this crowd, completely by chance, I also found myself with Vangelis. During the throwing of the fireworks, my daughter called me from Greece, to see what I was doing, and so I was given the opportunity to say happy birthday to her as well.

Walking by the river I've been hearing and reading about since I was little

One last thing that I will remember from Paris is one afternoon when Vangelis and I walked from our hotel to the river. The distance was long and when we reached the river it was dark. But it was worth all that walking, because when we reached the river we walked for a long time along its banks and admired its bridges. In fact, one of them was only for pedestrians and up there, that night, like every night, many groups had laid down blankets and were drinking wines, the famous French wines. The view from the bridge was excellent and accompanied by French wine I knew that these peopole were enjoying their life. Nothing to do with life in miserable Athens which not only has no river, but also no canals, as Milan has. Also that night we saw the complex of four huge impressive buildings, in the shape of an open book, that make up the Library of France. We didn't go inside but the view of this complex will be unforgettable for me, both for the volume of the buildings and their shape, as well as the fact that these huge buildings by the river were dedicated to the books. Surrounded by such huge buildings I felt very small. But it wasn't just there that I felt this way. All over Paris I felt this way, because the center of it is adorned with very large beautiful buildings which in terms of architecture, sculpture and decoration are so elaborate that they make you feel like some poor foreigner who has found yourself inside a palace, where everything goes on without your participation and you don’t fit in. Before I went to Paris I knew that I would encounter unimaginable beauty, but I could not have imagined that this beauty would have such enormous dimensions. The reality exceeded even my wildest imagination. Paris was much more

beautiful than I expected.

Before we left Paris, on the way to the airport, I got on a train without a driver for the first time. It was a train with few cars, which connected the subway line going to the airport with the airport. Its route was short, I think no more than 10 minutes. Unfortunately, my impression of this new, for me, technology was succeeded by a dead end that we encountered when, having arrived at the airport, we attempted to exit the platform exits: We had tickets that were not specific to the airport, i.e. they were more cheap, and the tubes at the outlets did not turn when we put them in the special slot. We couldn't get out and I saw no other solution than to jump from the top. Fortunately, Vangelis had reservations and, after much searching, found a station employee who led us to an exit without tubes. If we had jumped, as we often did in Paris to avoid the expensive ticket, we would have been noticed and had adventures. We could also have missed the plane. I have to admit that, in that phase, Vangelis saved me.

We return with Sophia for the third time to London and end up at the underground railway station, where we ended up on our first trip 32 years ago!

After my return to Greece, I proposed to my son to go on a trip abroad together, me, he and Sophia. Thus we left for London and then for Edinburgh, just before the schools started. My son wanted us to go straight to Scotland, but I assured him that he wouldn't regret it if he would see London that Sophia and I had visited twice before, lived in squats, and seen with our own eyes that it deserved its reputation as an international metropolis that had played a leading role in world history and to this day remains one of the most important decision-making centers on the planet.

So, a whole 26 years after 1984 when we had stayed in London, we were going back to see it, maybe for the last time, together with a sixteen year old son. When we left London on New Year's Eve 1985, we hoped that after a few months, and after I had "cleaned up" with the army, we would be there again. But instead of London, we ended up in Perugia and it took a full 26 years to set foot in this extraordinary city again. At least this time we would go by plane and devote our stay to sightseeing rather than to the movement like we had done in the past.

At London's Heathrow airport, after checking in, I did something stupid that I still haven't digested. In order to catch a subway that would take us to the hotel, since I thought it was the last of the day (it was well after twelve at night), I ran and got in, not making sure that Sophia and my son would get in early. And indeed the train left and they stayed at the platform. As the train left I gestured and shouted for Sophia to take the next one and meet at our destination station, not being sure if there would be another train and if Sophia had retained the name of the station.

Inside the subway, my cell phone couldn’t connect to Sophia's cell phone and we

lost contact. I didn't want to go back, maybe there was no train, but I didn't know what Sophia would do. At that moment I felt very stupid and at the mercy of chance, leaving Sophia and my son unprotected in a big city in the middle of the night. They didn't even have money to stay somewhere on their own, nor did I know if I could contact them again with my cell phone, since we were not in Greece but in England. Such a return to London, after 26 years, I could not imagine. And yet it was so beautiful a little while ago when we were on the plane and from above we could see the illuminated city below us, where its river stood out, the Thames and the Bridge of the Tower of London. The excitement that we were seeing this wonderful city again after so many years, it was cut short due to my stupidity. Fortunately, however, I was lucky again: Sophia had caught what I had shouted to her and had also retained the name of the destination station. This station was Gloucester Road and it was known to us since 1978, because we used to get off at this station even then in order to go to the hostel where we were staying. I don't know if this contributed to Sophia retaining its name, but the fact is that shortly after I got off the platform at this station, Sophia and my son arrived on the next train. I felt that I had narrowly escaped a very bad adventure, which I did not know where it would lead. "My guardian angel had saved me again."

Although London was familiar to us, when we got out of the subway station, the "Underground", as Londoners call their subway, which is also the oldest in the world, I felt that I was in another world, a world of incredible beauty. It was night, but that did not prevent one from seeing what a different world from the world of Greece, he was in. My son declared himself impressed. He could not imagine that such a world existed, although Europe was not unknown to him: he had already visited Venice with his school. I, although it bothered me that I spent almost my whole life away from this city, I did not feel that my life had gone "wrong". Fortunately I had managed, until then, to find it interesting enough even if I had not lived it in such a wonderful city that, although I knew it existed, I had not gone out of my way to live in it. At the age I was then, fifty-four years old, I now knew that most people do not do what they dream of when they are young, and that young people dream because they are not aware of the difficulties. Being with Sophia again in London, for the third time, made me feel as if I had competed in a long-distance road race and come out victorious. The fact that we had our son with us this time was proof of my success: not only were we back in London but we also had two children, one at university and the other at high school. Something which, like other things, gave meaning to the struggles we had done in the past, because it showed that society had not managed to destroy our lives, because of us being different, a difference that had cost us so many years in prison. If one believes in the value of life and science, two children who become scientists are a success for their parents, apart from the fact that they inherit the baton of their parents' struggles for a better life, if their parents have succeeded to make them respect their struggles for a better life. In these struggles, at least, death is not the end.

The ugly sides of London that I did not encounter in Paris

As soon as we arrived at the hotel I got an initial disappointment from England, due to the fact that, unlike what happens throughout Europe, the money for the room you book in a hotel, they ask in advance, before you even see the room. The next day I got a second disappointment from the fact that you cannot travel on the metro without a ticket or with the same ticket, as in France. At each subway entrance there is a security guard, always black, who checks what is done with the ticket cancellation machines. The third disappointment was that to buy alcohol from the supermarket you need to be at least 25 years old. And also after 11pm, neither any type of restaurant serves alcohol nor is it allowed to buy from the overnight supermarkets. These measures seemed excessive to me, especially since I knew that in England they voted from the age of 18. That is, deciding the fate of your country is considered to require less maturity than you need to consume alcohol! Another disappointment for me was that I found that the beggars on the streets were all young and robust, which led me to conclude that begging is run by a syndicate and that the police forbid anyone else to beg, no matter how needy. Finally, one last disappointment I got from the very first days in London was that every phone booth had ads with phone numbers of prostitutes accompanied by their photos. Such public denigration of women as a gender I could not digest. Especially since I knew that most of these girls were trafficked by pimps. This does not mean that those who are prostituted by their own free will did not end up in this torture after a personal drama that left them with no other choice.

Getting to know the sights of London that we hadn't seen, although we had been again there, for the first time 32 years before 2010

In London I did what I did recently in Amsterdam and Paris: I visited the sights, this time with Sophia and my son. Already from the time I was in Greece, I had taken care to ensure easy access to the sights, buying for all of us some special cards for this purpose and also booking dates for the places where one had to arrange the visit long in advance, such as Buckingham Palace. So, on our first day in London, we visited the British Museum which, like the Louvre, is so big that we had to visit it on the second day, in order to see all their rooms. This museum is so complicated that at one point I lost my orientation, but my son helped us get back on track. However, those who live in London do not need to rush to see it, in order to avoid paying a

ticket on the second or even the third day and so on, because the entrance to this museum, as in many other museums it's free. So anyone who is really interested in seeing their exhibits and learning a thousand interesting things can visit them whenever he wants. I wish the same was true for Greek museums, although I don't think there would be many Greeks who would take advantage of such an opportunity, judging by how many Greeks I see in museums, on certain days of the year when they are free.

Two other attractions we visited that we hadn't been able to see during our two previous stays in London were the Zoo and Tower Bridge. It may have been 26 years since I went with Sophia to the Zoo for the first time and we hadn't gone in because it was closing by the time we got there, but I hadn't given up and even after all these years I had set my sights on making it. Thus I did what I had not been able to do 26 years ago. Luckily we had the special cards I mentioned above with us, because at the entrance there was such a long queue that we would have waited until today. Those who had cards had priority access to the Zoo. We had faced the same thing at the Tower of London, where the cards saved us again from long hours of waiting in line.

Me and Sophia with the Tower Bridge in the background

Buckingham Palace - London from above

We had seen Buckingham Palace in 1984 only from the outside and we always remembered that old fellow from the anarchist bookshop 121 who, when we told him about it, told us that he, though a Londoner, had never seen it because he was not interested in royalty. But this time, as I said above, I had booked a visit date and tickets from Greece. Fortunately it was summer and the Queen of England and her family were away, as they are every summer, in Scotland, because otherwise the palace would have been closed to the public. And we couldn't even see all the rooms, except some of them, which, when the queen lived in her palace, were accessible to guests, such as the dining room and the palace gallery. And, of course, we had to join a group of visitors, which was guided by a palace official, i.e. there was no free movement in the palace halls. However, despite the limitations, for me at least, visiting this palace was an achievement, because I always wanted to have a taste of the spaces where the lives of those at the top of the social pyramid, such as the Queen of England, are spent. These places used to be off limits to the public and it took many struggles, even revolutions, to open them up to the public. Finally, on the steps leading to the palace garden, my son took a very nice picture of us, with Sophia greeting the crowd like a queen. I liked this photo because it proved that I may not have made Sophia a "queen" as I would have liked when I met her, but I had at least given her a chance to see where a real queen lived and be photographed herself in the palace of this queen.

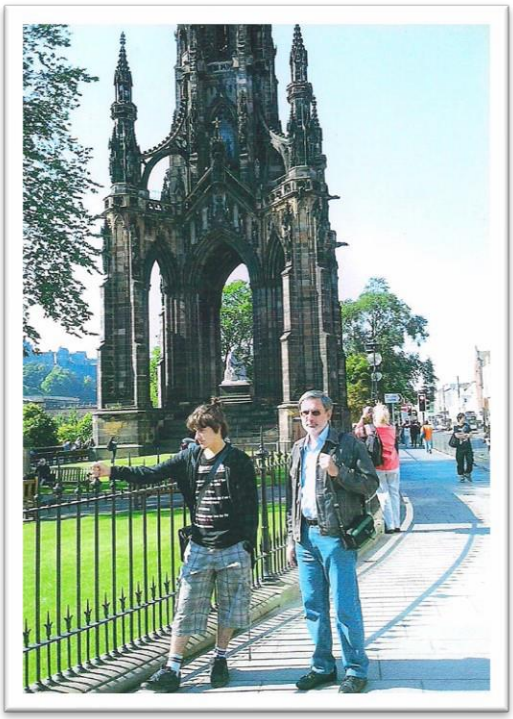
Sophia greeting the crowd like the Queen of England!

Also, this time we were in London, we saw London from above, which we hadn't done the other times. We may not have climbed the huge Ferris wheel they have built for tourists by the river, but we did climb the top of Tower Bridge and the balcony that surrounds the top of London's St. Paul's Cathedral. We also saw the center of London through the river, taking a tourist boat. If we add the long walk we did in the center of London, I can say that we saw something more of London this time, compared to the other times when I subconsciously considered sightseeing as a petty bourgeois' activitie unfit for an anarchist. So when we were leaving London for Scotland, by plane this time and not by bus like the previous one, although we had not had time to see Westminster Abbey from the inside, as we had seen it 26 years ago, I felt that, now, I knew London!

In Edinburgh with a delay of 26 years!

The last time Sophia and I had been to Scotland, we had been hosted by friends in Glasgow and this had cost us quite a few unpleasant adventures. This time we had no intention of mingling with comrades in Edinburgh, where we were going, and this saved us from misadventures. This city, Edinburgh, as I have written, we have wanted to visit since the time we were in Glasgow, 26 years ago. But we had run out of money and we didn't even have the Glasgow-Edinburgh bus tickets. At the time I was very annoyed that we had come so close to the famous Edinburgh and not seen it. Fortunately, we lived long enough and found the money to finally realize my dream, even if 26 years later. And with us we also had my son who by then we couldn't even imagine that we would have, because we weren't thinking about having children. My son was born 10 years later. And in fact, the idea to visit Scotland was his. He had an idea that made a 24-year-old dream of mine come true!

Indeed, Edinburgh is a city worth dreaming of visiting. It is a city that seems to have preserved its historic center more than London, in the sense that in this center they have preserved some very old streets and some very old buildings that economic reasons have eliminated from London. I think that this was contributed to by the fact that they did not have as much commercial value as in London on the one hand and on the other, already from the beginning of the 19th century, Edinburgh was a tourist destination for the well-to-do English, which the "national" Scottish author Sir Walter Scott had advertised with his books. He happened to write at a time when cultural nationalisms were developing throughout Europe, and he expressed this spirit of the time for his homeland. In short, the preservation of Edinburgh's medieval center is due to tourism. A tourism that today is exploited in extreme ways, such as nighttime wanderings into the depths of the city, which for tourist reasons has managed to become known as a town with ghosts!

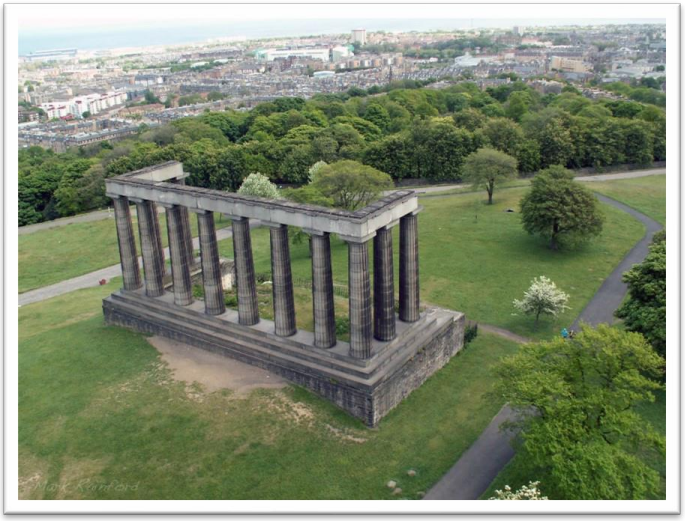


Me with my son in Edinburgh, in front of the monument dedicated to the "national" author of Scotland, Sir Walter Scott

The worship of ancient Greece by the Scots and the facade of Parthenon!

Since Scotland, according to the image spread about it by the Scots who exploit it for tourism, is famous for its castles, we visited the three most famous of them, with the first being the medieval castle that is located on top of the hill in the center of city. I found that these castles have recently been restored and their restoration continues intensively. This makes them more and more attractive for tourism and that is why they are a reliable and significant source of income for those who exploit them. On the contrary, in Greece, not only they do not restore the castles, but until they started receiving money from the E.U. for that purpose, they didn't even clean them. Like the mosques that were given the same treatment as the castles, the castles are tangible proof that Greek history is not limited to ancient Greece. Something which is disturbing to the national myth of Greece because it proves the existence in it, in the past, of other peoples with their own culture, such as the Franks and the Turks. However much the Greek nationalists are concerned about ancient Greece, I got the impression from Edinburgh that the ancient Greek culture was more appreciated by the Scots than by the Greeks. That is why they filled the city with buildings with facades of the ancient Greek style (columns, capitals, gables, etc.), with the

consequence that Edinburgh was given the name "Athens of the North". One such building, which was used as a mansion during the 19th century, we also visited. So we got a taste of how rich Scots lived in the era of the so-called industrial revolution, before they began to leave the city center and build villas in the suburbs, renting their houses to working-class families, who were crowded, too many, in every such house. The passion of the rich Scots of the 19th century for ancient Greece was so great that one of them began to build on a hill in the city a copy of the Parthenon, which, due to lack of money, was not completed, with the result that only a facade like the facade of the Parthenon remains!



The facade of the Parthenon in Edinburgh!

From this hill one night, me and my son together with thousands of people, watched, the fireworks from the medieval castle of the city.

Catholic-Protestant War and a Royal Blood Story – A medical museum with a long history

The Scots are Evangelicals, or Protestants, as the Greeks like to call them. But I could not imagine that, until this Christian doctrine prevailed in Scotland, there were so great conflicts between Catholics and Protestants, that in addition to the many lives they cost, they resulted in the destruction of many architectural treasures, such as Catholic churches and monasteries. I had the opportunity to see such a monastery next to the Holyrood Palace, where the Queen of Scots Mary Stuart lived. Although it was repaired some years after its destruction, it was eventually left to fall into disrepair.

The ruined abbey (monastery) next to Holyrood Palace

She was a Catholic queen who was overthrown by her subjects, fled to England, was put under house arrest there for many years, and then executed by Queen Elizabeth of England, even though she was her cousin. She was probably asking for trouble, because not only was she a Catholic at the time when the Protestants were winning the religious war in Scotland, but she did not hesitate to have her husband killed, so that he would not be an obstacle to her relationship with a lover. In this palace we also visited the room where the murder took place. Attractive tourist destination don't you think?

In one of the auxiliary buildings of the palace we were given the opportunity to visit a gallery with works from the time when painting was separated from the suffocating cord of the church, i.e. from the 17th century and beyond. It was there that I first heard my son express an interest in painting, after so many paintings he had already seen both in London and in Scotland (at least inside the Palace of Holyrood). This led me to conclude that in Greece, let's say, classical painting is so foreign to young people, that even if they find themselves in front of the most beautiful paintings, it goes unnoticed and that my son, finally, after seeing so many paintings, managed to to overcome the "myopia" in front of art that he obtained from the Greek educational system, and to see painting with different eyes.

In Edinburgh we were given the opportunity to visit for the first time a medical museum, which was founded by the oldest association of medical surgeons in Europe: The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. Older club, at least, according to the doctor who was the museum guard and gave us the information. This

museum had impressive exhibits that, at the time, I hoped would spark my son's interest in medicine. Of course, I can't say that they were aesthetically interesting, but they really stimulated curiosity and taught you many things that to learn by reading books, you would have to search for a long time. I was particularly impressed by two exhibits of effects of cancer on the body: The jawbone (of a famous gravedigger who was executed) that had grown and become like a sponge, and a lung that had been destroyed by cancer. I even remember reconstructed anatomy theatres depicting operating rooms of the past and present, featuring life-size mannequins as doctors and nurses. There were also rooms staged as old apothecaries, complete with figures from that era.

On Scotland's largest lake – Stirling Castle and Scottish Nationalism – The old cemetery on a hill in the center of the town

A few days after our arrival at Edinburgh, in order to see her I had sent a message to the daughter of Giannis Serifis, who lived there, and had formerly treated me cordially. She didn't answer and a few days before we left I called her. For various reasons she did not have time to see us during those days, although I had told her that we would be leaving. I didn't call her again before we left because on the penultimate or last day before our departure day we went on a tour bus trip to Loch Lomond and Stirling Castle. The bus driver came and picked us up from our hotel, as he did with the others who had signed up. He himself, during the excursion, was also the tour guide, speaking through the microphone of the bus almost continuously. Fortunately his articulation was good and my English good enough that I could "catch" most of what he was saying. Although his accent had a Scottish tinge, it was not like Pratt, Hugh and Tommy who had hosted us in Glasgow 26 years earlier. So understanding what he was saying and translating the highlights to Sophia, because my son probably understood them too and didn't need a translation, I was given the opportunity to enjoy this excursion, although we had the misfortune of raining most of the day. So when, through forests and mountains, we reached the lake and took a boat to tour it, we could not stand on the deck of the boat, where there was not sufficient sheltered space. What we saw of the lake and its shores, we saw through the portholes of the ship. On the shores of the lake there were various towers and mansions, which the boat's guide, whose service was included in the ticket we paid for the boat, told us about. The funny thing is that, while we were on the boat, I got a call from someone from Athens, who was interested in renting one of our properties that had not been rented for many years. I did not inform him that I was abroad and therefore it would cost him more this call. After all, he didn't rent it and all he managed to do was to take away valuable time from me while I was in the boat touring Loch Lomond. Loch Lomond was the most north-westerly place I ever visited

in my life. Till that point my lifetrack reached the northwest.

After the lake the driver took us to a countryside restaurant to eat and there we took the only photo where the three of us are together, me, Sophia and my son, during our trip to England and Scotland.

Finally we visited Stirling Castle which dominates over a plain, where a historic battle took place between the Scots and the English about 700 years ago, of which the Scottish nationalists are proud, because they defeated the English. In commemoration of this victory they have placed near the battlefield the statue of Robert Bruce who was the leader of the Scots during the battle. Although Scotland and England have been united for over 300 years, Scottish nationalists have managed to keep their flag and print separate banknotes, which have the same value as the English ones. And now of late, the nationalists have increased so much that they seek to separate Scotland from England again, as it was 300 years ago, and for this reason they are holding referendums. For Scottish nationalists, Stirling Castle is a symbol of the "warlike virtue" of their ancestors. I, however, although I appreciated the beauty of the castle, got a lot of rain, with the consequence that my mood was somewhat spoiled, especially when, as I walked through the battlements of the castle, I received a call from a friend from Greece who was in the mood for a conversation, and I forgot my umbrella in the battlements. And it was such a nice umbrella! I had bought it from the London Zoo as a souvenir but mainly to avoid the rain, because there too, before we left the Zoo, it had begun to rain.

Another attraction we visited before leaving Edinburgh was the old cemetery in the city centre. We had previously visited the impressive Glasgow Cemetery and I didn't want to miss the old cemetery of a city, like Edinburgh, which is so famous for its ghosts that there are tours of underground areas of the city at night in order the tourists to have fun. Unfortunately, this Edinburgh cemetery is not so large and full that it can be called a necropolis like Glasgow, but it has beautiful old monuments with architectural value and it is also on a hill in the historic center of the city, as if the dead in Edinburgh, as in Glasgow, they should be buried high up to enjoy the view...

This time when we were in Scotland, I was not "with a noose around my neck" from a financial point of view, as when we had visited Glasgow, so, apart from the excursion to Loch Lomond, we had visited the port of Edinburgh, Leith. Now that I think about it, I wonder why we visited Leith. However, I don't regret it, because even for someone coming for the first and last time to Athens, it wouldn't be bad to visit Piraeus, since you can go there by city bus, like from Edinburgh to Leith. Also the Edinburgh city buses that go to Leith are double-decker, so from their top floor you can enjoy the view of the beautiful buildings of the city all the way to Leith, because Edinburgh and Leith are not separated, just like Athens from Piraeus.

The reason we left Scotland after six days was that we had no more time to stay abroad, because it was September and the schools were opening. And my son was still a student. That's why we didn't stay a single night in London before taking the

plane to Greece. But since we had a few hours at our disposal before the plane took off, we thought of visiting the neighborhood and the houses where we had stayed in 1984.

A quick look at Brixton, where we squatted 26 years ago

So we met again in Brixton after 26 whole years. What first "struck my eye" was the dirt left behind by some folk. I didn't see any Council workers cleaning up the area, so my mind went to the filth on the streets we'd seen in East London in 1978, which was in stark contrast to the cleanliness in West London, where then, as and some days ago when we stayed in London, there was our hotel. I wouldn't be surprised by the dirt if it was due to the lack of time of the cleaning services due to the large amount of work that falls after a series of events that gather hundreds of thousands of people, such as the events in Notting Hill, from where, before going to Scotland, we had a passage. But here such events did't happen before. The filth was due to the municipality's indifference toward a neighborhood with many Black immigrants and other low-income citizens, such as Brixton. Municipalities in Greece do the same with neighborhoods and settlements where gypsies live. They do not collect the garbage, nor, in general, do they provide the gypsies with the benefits they provide to other citizens, such as drainage, street lighting, playgrounds, public taps, counseling services for families, daycare centers, etc.

It took us some time to find the street where the 121 bookstore and the houses where we were staying were. And that happened, because we had to rely solely on the map. Whoever we asked about this rather long road, Railton Street, didn't know it. Even when, by and large, we found ourselves on this road, a black woman we asked didn't know she was on this road, just like we didn't know either. Anyway, we found the building where the bookstore was located 26 years ago, but we had a hard time relating in our minds the image of the bookstore at that time, with what we saw in front of us. So great was the change that building had undergone. We faced the same difficulty with both houses, in which we had stayed. And these had undergone such changes that we were not sure that what we saw in front of us were the houses we had stayed in. In general, the neighborhood had been "gentrified" and the houses had become so nice that those who lived in them must have had a lot of money, since they were single-family houses. Anyway, I guess our son got a taste of where we lived ten years before he was born, when we stayed for a month and a half in London. And we, at least I, satisfied our desire to connect our current life with the old one that, due to the passage of many years, seemed to us a distant dream. Of course, we would very much like to see again the people we saw in that distant time, those who were at least still alive, because Meltzer, Feldman, even Leo had died. But we had since cut off our communication with them and had lost them. On the other hand, neither I nor Sophia had regretted not staying in the same place all these

years. What we had done, all this time, was quite important and interesting. After all, in life you don't always get what you want, as a Rolling Stones song says. I would like to have lived my whole life, after 1984, abroad, but not at any cost. I don't envy the immigrants who live in miserable conditions in Greece or other European countries and suffer all the racism and injustice that the bastards who infest the societies of these countries can unleash on them. Here in Geece even we who are not immigrants suffer, to some extent, from these bastards. Imagine what the immigrants are facing!

Again in Greece: The squat "Antiviosis" and the support to the refugees of the forest of Igoumenitsa

Anyway we arrived at the airport on time but, unfortunately, this time we were traveling directly to Greece, with the consequence that the plane was full of Greeks. So during the flight, from their voices, the banter they said, their displays of bravado and wit, we got a bitter taste for the world we were returning to, and immediately began to miss the world we were leaving behind. Even when the plane was landing at the airport of Spata, many of them were showing off how crazy they are by applauding the pilot because he managed to land the plane! As if he made a world record... What can you say... Such stupidity...

Fortunately, this trip was not my last abroad. I still had some money at the time. That is why, when that winter of 2011, when I went back to my daughter's house in Volos, to comply, as I used to, I visited Skiathos again. But the trip that winter that will remain unforgettable to me was to Igoumenitsa. I had gone back to Igoumenitsa, to an anti-racist gathering, together with comrades from Agrinio, after a night we spent in Ioannina, in the "Antibios" occupation, where an anti- militarism concert had been held in support of the total refusal of conscription.

That night I had luckily stayed in a hotel, because if I had stayed in the squat, I would have had a problem with the toilet: I had drunk a lot of beers of an unknown Bulgarian brand, and they pissed me off so much that I went to the hotel toilet too many times. I needed a toilet of my own. If I had stayed in the squat, I would not have had a toilet of my own and would have suffered. The next day, together with the comrades from Agrinio, we had gone to Igoumenitsa and, before going to the anti-racist rally in a beach square of the town, we had climbed with comrades from Igoumenitsa to the mountain, above the town, where many had camped immigrants in the hope that one day, legally or "illegally," they would get on a boat and go to Italy. The sympathizers distributed food to these immigrants from time to time and a female doctor examined whoever she wanted and gave them the medicines they needed.

Translated from Greek to English - www.onlinedoctranslator.com

The pan-Hellenic anti-racist demonstration in Igoumenitsa

This time I would go to Igoumenitsa with friends from Volos and Trikala, among whom was my daughter. There was a pan-Hellenic march in defense of the immigrants, whom the Igoumenitsa police had begun to drive off the nearby mountain or arrest, and the Volos' comrades had hired a coach to go to Igoumenitsa and return on the same day. So on January 29, 2011 I met with young comrades in a double- decker bus and got another taste of the quality of these comrades, listening to what they were talking about. Although the level was low, the taste I got wouldn't have been so bad, if it didn't happen to have a fool behind me, who was making stupid jokes all the way by shouting various obscenities and laughing out loud. Not only did no one put him in his place, but some even laughed at his nonsense. When we were returning to Volos, I couldn't stand it and from the top floor of the bus, where I was standing to see the view with the snowy landscapes, I went downstairs. Besides, I had seen enough on the way. That was also the first time I crossed from Thessaly to Epirus, without going up to the Katara pass, around 1600 meters altitude. We crossed a long tunnel, which had been under construction for many years and fortunately had already been finished by then.

In Igoumenitsa, all the buses ended up in the yard of the Technological Intitutes' building. The demonstration was organized in some large hall of TE.I. and I made sure to ask for emergency phone numbers to be announced. Among those announced was the phone number of one Christos who was one of the organizers. I made the mistake of not deleting it from my mobile after the demonstration, resulting in my later accidentally sending him messages intended for my brother. Although I wrote to him in messages that I had made a mistake, one day he called me and I had a hard time till making him accept that I was sending him messages by mistake and that had taken his phone number from that demonstration! Anyway, among the demonstrators I also found comrades from Agrinio and I was in their own block during the demonstration. The demonstration crossed the main street of the city and ended up on the mountain, but the police who had gathered from other cities to control the demonstration did not let us approach the immigrants. The immigrants had gathered in front of us at a great distance and were also shouting slogans. There was no reason why the cops wouldn't let us approach the immigrants. They were simply making a show of power and a show of racism. This demonstration ended in an attack by the police, during our coordinated return to the TE.I, under the pretext of some demonstrators bullying them. The cops had caused the fight, because all along the way we had them walking next to us, almost close to us, ready to hit us. Finally they found the pretext and beat us. They were faced with stones, but managed to arrest seven people.

The protesters with a view of the immigrants on the mountain, from whom we are separated by a cordon of policemen

When after the dispersal of the demonstration we returned to the TE.I. and we were besieged by the police from some distance, continuing to fire tear gas, even inside the TE.I, as they did when the riots broke out, discussions began to take place about how we should react to the arrests. It was decided not to leave Igoumenitsa without the seven arrested and until they are released we will go out every now and then, from the courtyard of TE.I. on the street, and shout slogans. So, after hours, the cops got tired and left and released the arrested, so that Igoumenitsa would not be at the center of the anti-racist action of the whole of Greece. Already the attitude of the coastguards and fascists in the area had created a very bad name, with one migrant killed by the coastguards by headbutting him on the port pier and other immigrants were shot by fascists who were shooting or abusing migrants with complete impunity.

Another image from the demonstration, with the cops preventing us from approaching the migrants and ready to hit us

Before we got on the buses to leave, I was lucky enough to meet Aris, the friend from Peristeri who had also come to our second event in Lefkada, and I proudly introduced my daughter to him. To have a daughter, who, besides studying, had adopted my humanitarian ideas, was reason enough, I think, for me to feel proud, and to show old comrades that their struggle was respectable for some remarkable young people, and worth to continue.

My book dealer comrade is getting seriously ill and I'm afraid I have the same illness!

At that time and while I was still in Volos, Sophia informed me that my comrade and book dealer Michalis Protopsaltis (Kokoras) had fallen seriously ill and was in the "Sotiria" hospital, where he had already undergone an operation. Sophia visited him and this made him very happy. I, even when I returned to Athens, did not visit him, because the news had caused an unbearable recurrence of my hypochondria, and I did not want to get worse. This included abdominal pains, which increased my fears that I too might have Kokora's disease. And the bad thing is that they lasted months. However, Kokoras might have suspected something, before he ended up in the hospital in February 2011, because on New Year's Eve 2011 we had met him at a

"bazaar" of his books and we had seen him in a very bad psychological state. We didn't suspect anything at the time, because he had been drinking too much and it was only natural that he looked bad.

Before I got hypochondria again, I couldn't imagine that even at this age (55 years old) I still wouldn't have wise up, that is, I wouldn't go to doctors for fear that they would confirm my worst fears. But I can say that in the end this adventure with my health benefited me, because a few months after Kokoras was released from the hospital, I went to a gastroenterologist and he recommended a colonoscopy, which, when he performed it, he found three polyps in my intestine and removed them. The only thing he didn't do was give me any treatment or even a painkiller for the pain. All he told me was that they had nothing to do with the pains of my belly. So I went to an urologist who also found nothing and therefore gave me nothing for the pains. In the fall my pains went away, but until then, like a fool, I didn't look into dealing with them myself, with the knowledge I could glean from my doctor brother and the internet. So I was in pain for nothing!

Fascists get the upper hand in Athens with the help of the Mass Media and with the protection of the police and the judges

That spring, namely the spring of 2011, was particularly disappointing for me not only because of the health problems I had, but also because I felt that I had been disproved in what I had believed for so many years: That after the fall of the dictatorship in 1974, Greek society was not at the mercy of fascism. From 1974 onwards the fascists, no matter how dangerous they were with their criminal activity that even led them to prison in the 1970s, in the elections did not get more than 1 percent of the vote and could never dominate at the streets. And yet the fascists, already from the time of the war in the former Yugoslavia and the simultaneous increase of immigrants in Greece, due to the fall of the communist regimes of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe (which began with the fall of the Berlin "wall of shame" in 1989), had been the "favorite childs" of the Mass Media and the preferred interlocutors for all the parties that were in power. The growing nationalism and racism, that accompanied the transformation of a large part of Greeks into bosses of immigrants without rights (with nationalism and racism the Greeks justified themselves for the predatory over-exploitation of immigrants), had already eroded Greek society since the 1990s and had made fascist ideas attractive. This nationalism and racism were exploited for profit by all businesses and above all the Mass Media who saw that the more they promoted the fascists, the more audience they secured. Other businesses exploited nationalism to secure buyers for their products by promoting the fact that they were produced or manufactured in Greece. In fact,

nationalism was so successful in the advertising sector that businesses were able to sell Greek products as more expensive than the corresponding products imported from abroad. Other Greek businesses, like the Greek banks that supported them, expanded to the maximum, exploiting the workers of former communist countries by buying or establishing factories and branches in those countries, where wages and salaries were much lower than in Greece. Thus Greece, as early as the 90s, had emerged as the first imperialist power of the Balkans, and nationalism and racism served the imperialists to justify the predatory exploitation of workers. As nationalism and racism served the American slaveholders of the southern states of the United States during the era of slavery and before its abolition after the American Civil War. As it served the German Nazis who exploited the workers of the countries they had conquered during the Second World War, either in their own countries or in the concentration camps.

Even politically, fascism did not fall from the sky in the 2010s. The way was paved for it by the organization of the most extreme nationalists and racists into a party, as early as the early 2000s. This party, the People's Orthodox Alert, had already since then brought racist and nationalist ideas to the forefront of political current affairs and had offered all kinds of nationalists and racists the possibility, these ideas, to defend them politically. And although the P.O.A. did not engage in pogroms, the nationalist and racist ideas they espoused were enough in themselves to create pogroms, such as the largest pogrom in Athens' recent history, in September 2004, after the victory of the Albanian national football team over the Greek counterpart, which strangely (?) a few months ago was named European champion. From this pogrom at least 500 people were taken to the hospitals and yet no one was ever punished for it, while the Mass Media got, like always, the part of the pogromists. And yet even the unpunished nationalist and racist crimes were not something new for Greek society. Something that appeared only in the 2000s. They started when Albanians started coming to Greece en masse. The first to emerge as racists, as they always do, were the armed men with uniforms. In the specific case of the Albanians, the first to stand out were the policemen and the soldiers guarding the border between Greece and Albania. In fact, as it was revealed at the time, gunmen of a nationalist organization called the Northern Epirus Liberation Front had entered Albania unmolested and had killed two Albanian soldiers. Nationalist and racist crimes, which were always justified by the Mass Media, had come to be done with ridiculous excuses, such as e.g. that the perpetrator killed the victim because the victim had entered his garden to steal cabbages or because he had stolen a bicycle from him. In fact, if the assailant was in uniform, even off duty, he could kill an Albanian with impunity, only on the pretext that he considered him a suspect of committing a crime. At the same time, the unpunished torture against immigrants

continued with impunity in these two decades, before the decade of 2010, and they rarely saw the light of publicity. As it happened with the torture of Afghan refuges in the police station of Saint Panteleimon in Athens, that saw the light of publicity.

The "movement of the squares" precursor to the dominance of the fascists in the squares and in the streets of Athens

The difference between the 2010s and the previous two decades was that nationalism came out openly in the squares, centered on Syntagma Square, taking cover behind the anti-memorandum movement of the "indignants" who for many months occupied squares, like Syntagma Square, in order to overthrow the PA.SO.K. government, because the latter could not meet the needs of all those who are paid, for various reasons, by the state and had borrowed money from banks. This movement was characterized as anti-memorandum, because the foreign bankers who lent to the Greek state had set conditions, in order to lend, gathered in documents that were characterized as memoranda. Among these conditions were cuts in the money given by the state to millions of Greeks and an increase in taxes. The "indignant" and the anti-memorandum movement in general, to which it had also resorted, for vote-hunting reasons as it turned out later, the left, considered the foreign countries from whose banks, the Greek state, borrowed, responsible for the cuts and taxes. In this way they maximized the influence of nationalism, which always presented Greece as a victim of foreign nations.

With such open and massive support it was only natural that nationalism and racism would become more and more aggressive and politically strengthen the most extreme nationalists and racists: The Fascists. After the so-called square movement, where the far-right had played a central role with their flags and their anti-parliamentary and anti-democratic slogans, the fascists managed to dominate the far-right and gather the support of voters from other parties because they were the most fanatical nationalists and racists. In the violence and anti- parliamentarianism that they professed, many anti-memorandumists saw the only hope for the abolition of Greece's borrowing, without believing that such a thing would leave the Greek state without money and them without being paid by it or paying increased taxes. They trusted the state violence that the fascists promised they would use to fill Greece with forced labor camps, where they would lock up all immigrants and force them to work without pay. The fascists saw their power skyrocket, for the first time since 1974, because they promised their voters that the money the state would not take from the lenders it would secure it with forced labor camps and the heavy taxation of those they considered enemies of the nation, the homeland and orthodoxy. Their voters, for money reasons, were willing to even wage a civil war. In any case, they bet that they would not fight, but only the men in uniform would.

Fascists dominate Athens and organize patrols where they abuse brutally immigrants – A personal experience of the fascist pogrom of the spring of 2011

This was the climate in May 2011, when the fascists, united behind the Nazi organization Golden Dawn, decided to make a rehearsal of their ability to take Athens, the capital of the country, into their hands. Thus, taking advantage of a robbery with murder that took place in the center of Athens which was attributed by the police to Pakistanis, they unleashed themselves in the center of the city and its districts, mainly the western ones, and started a pogrom against immigrants and anyone whose face they did not like, which lasted over a month. They had with them, apart from the uniformed officers and the judges, all the Mass Media and a considerable number of people who always like to be in a state of commotion. The only ones who timidly articulated some reason to protest against the pogrom were some anti-fascist organizations and some anti-authoritarian squats. And this reason formulated so as not to irritate the fascists and the mob that followed them. In particular, they condemned social cannibalism, putting "in the same sack" the fascist gangs that professionally engaged in pogroms, with any impoverished person who committed any serious crime against life. As if for the first time, in May 2011, they had seen crimes against life and property being committed in Greece!

I, personally, got a taste of the pogrom in Nikaia, which has been distinguished in the past for the action of both communists and fascists (eg with the "Red Block" in 1944). I had gone there one night to find an old friend, Kyriakos Vassiliadis, and a new one, Vangelis. With them and with Sophia, and also another friend, Akis Asprogerakas, we had started, since the previous year, to make a documentary about the anarchists of the 70s. With them I had ended up in a tavern with Greek flags, which Vasiliadis had recommended (!) to us, and we had eaten something. The tavern wasn't crowded at all, just a group of four black-clad men of various ages talking quietly to each other. When we left the tavern we went in the main square of Nikaia, to take the trolley and go back to Athens. There as we were waiting at the trolley stop together with a young man who looked Albanian, a woman on a motorcycle dressed in black stopped in front of us to ask if we were all Greeks. I didn't understand what it was about and immediately did some insinuations about the Greeks, but she, who was looking for foreigners to be abused by the gang that was waiting for her phone call, probably the four from the tavern, didn't pay attention to me and started questioning the young man who looked like an Albanian. But he spoke perfect Greek and so she was not convinced that he was a foreigner, to call the gang to lynch him. So the poor man escaped and after the fascist left, he also left and went and waited for the trolley at another stop. From this stop I saw him get into the trolley which, finaly, I took from the stop at the main square.

Although 17 days after the begining of the pogrom took place an anti-fascist demonstration, the fascists who had as their base the place where the robbery with murder had taken place, were not bothered and the pogrom continued as usual. Every day I read about severely abused immigrants who ended up covered in blood in hospitals and several, around five or six were murdered, without the police ever finding the perpetrators. In fact, the corpses of some were ostentatiously thrown in trash cans, given that for the high- ranking executive of Golden Dawn, Kasidiaris, immigrants are trash, from which Golden Dawn will clean the country.

So, as I said before, in the spring of 2011 I saw Greek society at the mercy of fascism. The city in which I had been born 55 years ago, and in which I had fought so many years, and at such great cost, for a better society and a better man, was under the control of the fascist gangs who could abuse to the point of blood and even kill, always with impunity, any immigrant they want. And the movement that I believed would prevent the rise of fascism was, in practice, non-existent. Since then, not only do I not believe in the grandiose words that all kinds of saviors in Greece indulge in, but I also feel a deep dislike for them.

The attempts for a documentary about the anarchists of the 70s

Now about the documentary about the 70s anarchists that I mentioned earlier, it was an idea aiming to respond, as anarchists, to a documentary that came out in 2009. This documentary presented as the ideological ancestors of today's anti-authoritarian movement (much of which it defines itself as anarchist) the communists from the E.A.M.(N.L.F.) and E.L.A.S.(N.P.L.A.), even those who came forth after the fall of the dictatorship. Throughout this documentary, where they talk from Trotskyists, like my old comrade Sofronis Papadopoulos, to members of city guerrilla groups like Katsaros and Tsigaridas, only one anarchist appears and that is Thodoros Pisimisis, whose collective, to which he belonged in the past , the "Union of Anarchists of Greece", promoted city guerrilla tactics as no other anarchist collective did, before its creation in 1987. The action and struggles of the anarchists of the 70s do not appear anywhere in this documentary and there are not mentioned from any of the interviewed. Because I considered that this documentary silences the struggles and persecutions of the anarchists of the 70s, in order to promote in the anti-authoritarian milieu the idea that there was nothing in Greece, after the second world war, but a communist movement, whose most brilliant moments were the armed struggle for the conquest of power (aiming, this documentary, the anarchist milieu to join the armed struggle following in the footsteps of the communists), I decided not to stand idly by and answer this documentary with a documentary about the anarchists of the 70s. For the creation of this documentary I turned to old and new comrades, such as Kyriakos Vassiliadis and Vangelis and, with great difficulty and many refusals from the comrades to whom I turned, a group of five people was formed to work on the documentary, without being closed to new members. In this group I made the the mistake of

entrusting most of the responsibilities, in order to find old comrades, to Vasiliadis, whom I respected too much at the time, and the technical part to Akis, Asprogerakas, who I had seen filming the presentations of Kokora's (Mihalis Protopsaltis) books with a very good camera. Below it will be seen why I am talking about mistakes.

I initially approached Sophia and Vangelis and agreed with Vangelis that he should make an initial foreword and a questionnaire, because he had already contributed to a very large extent to the creation of another documentary about anarchists, which was already being screened publicly. Then I turned to Akis, who had approached me at some stage in "Nosotros" during an event with Kokoras, and had shown me great respect. He was also an old comrade and close friend of Kokoras, whom he knew from the sixth grade high school, where they went during the dictatorship. Akis accepted and in order to push the others we would approach to do the same, i.e. to give an interview, Akis took an hour of video based on the Vangelis questionnaire. In this video I only managed to answer half of the questions and towards the end it has a serious audio problem so that part of it, maybe the most important, is useless. Fortunately, after Akis's suggestion, Vangelis also shot me with my own low-quality camera, so the answers that are not heard in Akis' video, are heard in Vangelis'.

Then I turned to Vassiliadis, who agreed, but rejected out of hand the work that Vangelis had done up until then with the preface and the questionnaire and he undertook to find people to talk to, without a questionnaire. At the same time, he undertook to write a script on which the documentary would be based. And before we saw the script, together with him we turned to his old friend and comrade of his brother (Stelios Vassiliadis) Kostis Triantaphyllou, with whom we met one night in the occupied municipal market of Kypseli, where Asprogerakas recorded in an audio file what was said about the anarchists of the 70s. This Kostis, while he agreed to give an interview, postponed it with various excuses, until at some point when we called and I asked him to finally give the interview, he told me that he did not want to participate in the documentary, because Vassiliadis in his script presented his brother, who had been killed in a car accident in 1974, as if he had started the post-war anarchist movement, though he was just one among others. I had never met Vassiliadis' brother and friend and comerade of Triantafyllou and I tried to convince Triantafyllou not to leave the documentary because of a simple disagreement he had with Vassiliadis, which could be discussed anyway. But he was undaunted and, in the end, he also fought with me when I told him that, because he did not want the history of the anarchists of his time to be known, he did not consider it worth talking about. Much later he made up with Vassiliadis, but he never participated in the documentary.

We approached many people about the documentary, such as the publisher of anti-authoritarian books Giorgos Garbis, to whom I took a lot of material with posters and leaflets from that time (the 1970s) along with the script, to convince him to participate but I didn't succeed. Until someone is found again for an interview, I was in Lefkada on business. Vassiliadis and Asprogerakas, without asking me, proceeded on their own to interview, without a prepared questionnaire, old comrades who were friends of Vassiliadis, such as Gondikakis, Skouloudis and Foteinou. When I came back from Lefkada, Asprogerakas was gone and wouldn't answer emails or phone. This unwarranted and, as it turned out, prolonged disappearance, caused Sophia to become indignant and send an email to everyone, in which she strongly criticized the disappearance of Asprogerakas. When, months later, we all managed to meet again to see what we were going to do with the documentary, I learned that in the intervening time, Vassiliadis had special contacts with Asprogerakas in order to gain access to the General Archives of the State to gather material for his brother, and also Vangelis had taken some other jobs from Asprogerakas. In this meeting, Vassiliadis attacked me for Sophia's message, which he thought was mine (perhaps he doesn't take women seriously?), and I tried my best to convince him to "let go" and continue with the documentary. He, after much discussion and some brandy, started cursing vulgarly and I asked him to stop, to no avail. It was late spring or early summer, so we ended up stopping the documentary and meeting again in the fall to continue. At least that's what I understood, because Vasiliadis had not given a clear answer as to whether he would continue with us.

The documentary about the anarchists of the 70s and the reactions

That summer, in order to have something in case the documentary didn't continue, I had to make a video by editing the ones that existed until then, including one with Kokoras (Mihalis Protopsaltis) which had been filmed at a book fair , after his release from the hospital. I based this video on Vassiliadis' script, making it appear that it all started with his brother, although a "second reading" of the video negates this image. I also included material from posters and flyleafs of that time, as well as video from the 1973 occupation of the Polytechnic University (N.T.U.A.) and other videos related to the time. It came out around an hour and a quarter, but with a problem with the sound, which fluctuates. I uploaded it without completing it on You Tube, as closed to the public, so that there would be something in case I die.

Unfortunately, this is how the documentary ended, regardless of whether I found other old comrades willing to participate, because on the one hand I lost the passion that pushed me to create it, after the departure of Vasiliadis and the way he spoke to me, as we will see below, and on the other hand I could not secure a good camera

for the video recordings.

I found Vassiliadis again at an anti-fascist march against the Golden Dawn in Nikaia, which ended in its violent break-up by the police. When I told him about the documentary, he told me that he had no intention of continuing, because he had grown cold towards me since our last meeting about the documentary, when I told him that we should decide by vote on the content of the documentary. I didn't remember telling him anything like that, but if I had told him, I would have told him because I wouldn't have agreed with him regarding the content of the documentary. After all, I wasn't the only one in the documentary team. He, perhaps, heard from others about his brother being overemphasised in the documentary and related our discussion of the technical issues to others' objections to the content of the documentary. Anyway, if his intention was that there would be no documentary, from that meeting in Nice he learned from me that I, in order for there to be something, had already prepared a video of one hour and a quarter of the hour, where I had included the most appropriate excerpts of the interviews that had already been taken, and that I had uploaded it to the Internet "closed", to be opened after my death, if it was not completed by then. This infuriated him and he told me that I made the documentary because I was claiming posthumous fame and that he disagreed strongly with what I had prepared. Our conversation then ended with me urging him to sue me for copyright if he wanted to, and we haven't talked about it since. Before I met him in Nikaia, he had already written a book about his brother, based on the documentary script, which he brought home to us. After that meeting in Nikaia, he stopped talking to me and “I couldn't care less”, as they say in Greece. Finally, with regard to the posthumous fame, Vassiliadis not only wrote a book about that time focusing on his brother, but also held an entire event in a public space on the theme "How it all began", where together with his friends and companions, such as Kostis Triantafyllou and Foteinou, gave an image of the anarchists of the 1970s, where he has in central position. It seems that, when he told me that I wanted fame and that's why I made the documentary, he "judged the other people like himself". The fact that the documentary would be a response to the documentary "The lottery ticket sellers of the Sky", where the communists who wanted to seize power by arms are projected as the ideological ancestors of today's anti- authoritarian movement, turned out to be fine print for the mind of Vassiliadis!

The presentation of the Macedonian-Greek dictionary at the "Nosotros" social center

Having prepared the documentary that I uploaded to You Tube, I felt more prepared to face head on the possibility of illness and death that I feared I might face if I went to doctors for the health problems I mentioned above. In order to overcome the

hypochondria that prevented me from going to the doctors, except that I had finished, even temporarily, my work with the documentary, I promised myself that if the doctors and the tests went well, I would organize a series of events with anti-nationalist themes. So I managed and "pulled myself from the ear" and took him to the doctors I mentioned above in the fall of 2011. Fortunately, as I mentioned above, everything went well.

Now where was I basing my hopes up that I would find a place for the events? I based them on the fact that, in the past, the "Nosotros" social center on Themistokleous Street had hosted an event for the right of our neighboring state, located in the north of Greece, to be called "Macedonia". That is why I thought that if I asked the assembly of this social center to organize some similar event, they would accept. So, one Monday, I went to the roof of "Nosotros", where their weekly meeting took place, together with Alexia, who at that time had not yet been absorbed by her duties at Amnesty International and participated normally in the Anti-Nationalist Movement.

I had arranged with Alexia for her to request a place for an Anti-Nationalist event on the subject of the presentation of the Macedonian-Greek dictionary, which had recently been released. In fact, I had also arranged with a member of the editorial team of the "Babylonia" magazine, comrade Nikos Ioannou, to speak as well, in the event that we would secure a place for the event. And indeed, after a long wait, Alexia took the floor and convinced them to give us the lecture hall for the event. It was my idea for the event to take place on October 28, when the state and the nationalists celebrate the start of the Second World War for Greece. Since the presentation of the Greek-Macedonian dictionary, written by the same author, had been attacked by the Golden Dawn nationalists, I thought that an event similar to the one Golden Dawn had struck, on the day the nationalists make a show of strength, it would showed them that we are not afraid of them and that "Nosotros" is not an "open vineyard", as the Hall of Foreign Press Correspondents was for them, on Akadimia avenue.

Our comrades from "Nosotros" undertook to set up the poster for the event, while we, the Anti-Nationalist Movement, undertook to print and stick it. So, after Lefkada, where some time ago I stuck the yellow anti-racist poster together with the Agrinio comrades, now I found myself sticking the poster calling for the event in the center of Athens, together with my colleagues Nasos Theodoridis and Alexia Tsiuni. It goes without saying that I greatly appreciated their offer because, as is known, in the political milieu of the left there is such an hierarchy that the posters are not pasted by the officials of the parties and organizations but by students close to these parties and organizations, who have little or no say in the decisions that determine the line of parties and organizations. The participation of Nasos and Alexia in the poster pasting proved that, in the Anti-Nationalist, there was no hierarchy and the relations between

the members were equal.

Indeed, the event went smoothly and the Golden Dawn nationalists were unable to stop it. The speaker, in addition to comrade Ioannou, was the representative of the minority party Uranio Toxo and member of the Anti-Nationalist Movement Pavlos Voskopoulos (Filipov in Macedonian), who had arranged for two Macedonian journalists to come to the event, who, after the event, took us interview. One was from the TV Channel 5 of the Republic of Macedonia and she recorded our interviews on video, which she later showed on the channel. The other was from a Macedonian newspaper. The entire event was filmed by the then treasurer, and then president of the Hellenic branch of Amnesty International, Katerina Kalogera, with her video camera. After all that, I can say that the event was a success, but unfortunately, although it was held in a social center run by anti-authoritarians, it did not attract the anti-authoritarians' interest in anti-nationalism.

The poster inviting to the presentation of the dictionary

It doesn't take much imagination to assume that the Greek media were absent from the event, since Greek journalists never had the courage and moral standing to challenge the state's monopoly on reporting on so-called "national" issues. Now, in fact, it is not only the state apparatus with the police and the judges that threatens the journalists who "will escape from the fold" but they are also threatened by the knife-wielders of the Golden Dawn, who behave like cops and are never convicted for "impersonating a public official".

From the presentation of the Macedonian-Greek Dictionary in "Nosotros". Me on the left, Pavlos Voskopoulos in the center and Nikos Ioannou on the right

Three anti-nationalist events at the "Nosotros" social center

From my contacts with "Nosotros" I was informed that within the framework of this social center there was an initiative aimed at educational events and it was known as "Self-Education Circles". I thought it good to approach this initiative and ask to collaborate on a series of three events concerning history. My proposal was accepted and the initiative secured three consecutive Thursdays in January (of 2012) for our events. I asked for three events, because I had in mind one event on Falmerayer and

the origin of the Greeks, one on the Ottoman Empire and one on the fate of the Greek Jews. In this way we would hit nationalism at its sensitive points: The false national identity it promotes, the historical lies with which it cultivates the hatred of the Greeks against the Turks and its anti-Semitism that focuses on the state of Israel. Fortunately, for these events, I was able to secure the most suitable speakers, such as Nasos Theodoridis, Abdulhalim Dede, Nikos Gasparis who had translated the book "History of the Greek Jews" and a comrade from the Terminal 119 group, which , in the past, had given me the best interview of my life. To all three events I would also speak, thus giving the content of each event the stamp of my own anti-nationalist view, which I also considered more radical.

As expected, the technical part would be taken over by me, who also had the idea. That is, I would have to make posters, find people to put them up, publish the events on the Internet and find someone to videotape the events. Even a video camera I would have to put. And I didn't have a good one, except for a cheap one that I got when my family lived in Lefkada and I took it for "family videos". I don't know if it's a matter of my own inability to find people to help me with technical matters, or in my environment such people are a luxury, however, throughout my life I almost always had to do whatever work I undertook by myself. However, it is better that a result, such as a video recording, is not perfect, than that it does not exist at all. In the given case of the three events, I at least had an assistant in the matter of putting up the posters. Whom; My daughter. And I think that Sophia also helped me at some point in the pasting of posters, in addition to Nasos and Alexia, while I had my comrade Vangelis as a cameraman with my video camera. Of course, the most tiring part of event preparation for me was not the posters and, in general, publicizing of the eventst, but writing my speeches. Since I rarely speak at events, I wanted to have something worthwhile to say at these three. So I had to gather information from the best books on these subjects. Fortunately they were not foreign to me and so I was able to retain the information I found in the books. No one needs to doubt that I have chosen the most disturbing books for nationalism: The book "History of Moria in the Middle Ages" by Falmereyer, the books of the author of the manifesto of the Anti-Nationalist Movement Nakratzas, the book "Death and Exile" by the American professor Justin McCarthy, which no one dares to publish in Greek, Fleming's "History of the Greek Jews" and "Life from the Beginning" by Iakov Sibi and Katerina Lampsa. And it goes without saying that I also consulted other books. In general, I got too tired to prepare my talks and therefore did not continue such educational events in the future. I was particularly tired of the American professor's book, because he had too many facts about the extermination of the approximately five million Muslims of Europe, and I had to choose the main ones for my speech. I didn't know what to leave out, because all the elements were important. After all, the book was in English and not in Greek, which I am comfortable with

The event about Falmerayer and the origin of the Greeks

The first event, on the subject of Falmerayer and the origin of the Greeks, took place on January 12. It wasn't very crowded, if we take away the people who, anyway, would be in the main hall of Nosotros that night, because they had not come for the event but to drink some beer or something, since Nosotros " operates every night like a coffee shop with very low prices. Even the friends from the "Self-Education Circles" were absent, as were most of the members of the management assembly of this social center. Pending this development, it would have been too much trouble to do so much work for so few people if I had not taken care of videotaping the event. I had intended to put it on the internet, on You Tube, so I was not discouraged by the small number of attendees. And I actually put it on the internet and I even put my paper on a scientific paper uploading site, and since then it's been read by over 1000 people from all over the world. Nassos had not prepared a speech but spoke from notes, so his speech is nowhere to be found except on the video of the event. This is, in all probability, the first event that took place in Greece with the purpose of defending Falmereyer and not condemning him. If so, I am proud of it and I feel that I have done my duty, at least towards Pantelis Softzoglou who had the moral fortitude and the necessary perseverance and patience to translate for the first time into Greek Falmereyer's book "History of the Peninsula of Moria in the Middle Ages", a full 170 years after its publication in German, as I did my duty to the publishers of this translation.

The poster for the event on Falmerayer and the national origin of modern Greeks

The event about the Ottoman Empire and the tragic consequences of its collapse for its inhabitants

Compared to the second event in the series, the one dedicated to the Ottoman Empire, the event for Falmereier went smoothly. Maybe because neither I nor Nasos had been cursed and slandered by the Mass Media and the internet, as the guest speaker at the Empire event, member of the Anti-Nationalist Movement Abdulhalim Dede. At this event, not only had people come to openly provoke him, but also at the entrance of "Nosotros" supposed anti-authoritarians threw dozens of tracts with the slogan "No to Turkish nationalism" and "No to Greek nationalism", considering that anti-nationalism it is a defense of foreign nationalisms and therefore must be fought. Also, during the event, an old man habitue of "Nosotros", Fotis, kept coughing and banging his beer glass on the table, to spoil the video recording. Another, while Abdulhalim was speaking, jumped up and started a non-stop rant to break up the event. I had to come to grips with him, luckily no blows were exchanged, in order for him to let us continue. Another of the listeners who I had previously seen running the bar of "Nosotros", during the discussion after the presentations, came to us, took the microphone and began to accuse us of being enemies of her homeland, Greece. She was answered in a very aggressive way, I can say, by a friend of Nasos, a professor at a university in Paris, Natasha Tsoukala. Even the representatives of "Nosotros" who had allowed us the event, were accused and apologized on the anti-authoritarian news site "Indymedia". They apologized for not judging whether or not to grant the room by the content of the event but by who had requested it. They wrote that they could not refuse the room to Philip Kyritsis, thus covering themselves behind my history of struggles and the good name I had in the anarchist milieu.

At the event about the Ottoman Empire, after my invitation, my friend ex-prisoner and then homeless, anarchist poet Cornelios Louloudis had also come. He was the only one who tried to stop the annoying old man, Fotis, from making noise. He must have had some acquaintance with him, I gather. For some time Fotis would stop but then he would start making noise again. Fortunately, despite his efforts, the noise he made was not heard on the video, so it was lost.

The event poster for the Ottoman Empire, which caused so many reactions

The event on the history of Greece from a Jewish point of view

The third event, which had the theme of Greek history from a Jewish point of view, gathered more people than the previous two. I attribute this to the fact that members and friends of the collective that produced Terminal 119 magazine had come to it. They had come because I had invited a member, or rather a party official, of this collective to be a speaker. He did not want his face to be known over the internet and therefore made it a condition of his presence that the event not be videotaped. I don't know if I did the right thing to accept, but I did, so we limited ourselves to simply recording the event, which I did with my cell phone. I had a good cell phone back then. But it didn't last many years. At this event I was fortunate to have as a speaker and the translator of the book "History of the Greek Jews", a very pleasant and low-key man. With this speaker, the comrade from the Terminal and me, the event was, I can say, one of the most daring on

the subject of the wronged of all time: The Jews. Of course, we did not avoid the presence of anti-Semites at the event, since the great majority of Greeks are anti-Semites, and, as I expected, they asked us to condemn Israel. I cut them off by telling them that was off topic and therefore we had no intention of discussing Israel. And yet from my own proposal at least, which was based on the book "Life from the Beginning", it emerged that the creation of the State of Israel with immigration to it was the only solution for the future of the Jews of Europe, since their houses and their properties had been destroyed or seized by Christians during the war.

The poster for the event we did for the Jews of Greece

The day after the day of the event was Holocaust Memorial Day (January 27). The previous night we had managed to show the anti-Semites of the anti-authoritarian space that there are also some anarchists who still remember the drama of the Jews and are not intimidated by the hatred that the anti-Semites have for the state of Israel.

Translated from Greek to English - www.onlinedoctranslator.com

My last trip to my father's hometown, Trikala

The spring of 2012 was the last time I would be in Volos visiting my daughter and doing chores at her house and, whenever I was done, making trips to places near Volos that were worth going to. I don't remember if I visited Skiathos again then, but I must have visited my father's hometown, Trikala, for the last time. This time I would go alone and walk more than any other time, because, as I've said before, to get to know a city, you have to walk it yourself. And indeed, this time, I saw Trikala at my leisure and since then I have kept a general image of them in me. Even my bus trip was interesting this time. I was given a ticket for seat 1, behind the driver, so I had the best view of the road ahead, and there happened to be a girl in her twenties sitting in the adjacent seats, who told the driver her life story , of a sad life that had made her an avid smoker. Her story began as an explanation of her pressuring the driver to get to our destination quickly so she could smoke. So, they had married her when she was fourteen years old and had a child. Her husband had been killed after a few years and left her nothing to raise the child. So she did whatever jobs she could, in order for her and the child to survive. At that time she worked in a bar in Volos and went to Trikala to see her mother.

The first thing I did in Trikala was to look for the mosque that was near the old prisons. I remembered the mosque full of garbage and shit, as well as the building next to it which was like a very small mosque, from the time when I went with my father and the whole family to Trikala for Easter and we ended up roasting lamb at his aunt Marina's house. This house of my paternal aunt I wanted to see, knowing that it was near the mosque. And indeed I found it, some forty-five years later since I had last seen it. It still existed but was uninhabited and had its mess. Its yard seemed to me like a corridor and the tulumba (manual water pump), where we washed in the mornings, when we slept in it, did not exist. On the side of the road there was a rusty front door, where there was a rusty sign with the information "Ioannis Sfalagas, Lawyer". I didn't need it to make sure I was in the right place. The whole building had been preserved, as it was in the past, and even the warehouse had been preserved which in the past might have been used as a stable, because it was in a state of disrepair. The corridor that made up the courtyard ended in a large open space, like a park, surrounded by single-family houses a few decades old. In general, this house of Marina was a dissonance for the area, because next to it, on the side of the road that came from the prisons and the mosque, there were all apartment buildings just like opposite it. Time seemed to stand still in this house. A shame, because I couldn't imagine its story ending some years after the time we visited. It must have ended with Marina's death, because her children didn't have children and I didn't know if they were even alive. I didn't want to leave that house, full of memories of my childhood, without knowing what became of Marina's children Giannis(the lawyer) and Fotini. So, even though I'm a very shy guy, I plucked up the courage and asked a

neighbor of theirs whom I saw on the raised balcony of a single-family house, just before the house, on the same street. I asked her if she knew them and she told me that, not only did she know them, but she had also met their mother, Marina. From her I learned that Giannis had already fallen so far, from old age, that his sister was taking care of him. In fact, the woman offered to tell me where their apartment was, so I could go find them. I told her that I would go see them one more time, which, while I would love to, I knew would never happen. So instead of going to those distant uncles of mine, I went to see the mosques. This time I found them preserved and learned that the very small one was just a grave. I guess they maintained them with money from the European Union, of which they may have siphoned off some by the method of over-invoicing. Not that they give a damn about Ottoman culture. After the mosque, which I only saw from the outside, because it was closed, I also went to see the old prisons that were nearby. They still had their pens and lookouts but, being the scared person that I am, I didn't attempt to climb any of the lookouts. From their main entrance I only looked through the small window of the outer gate but I saw nothing more than a corridor with obvious signs of long-term abandonment. The sight of a closed prison is always pleasant, when you imagine how much the people who were imprisoned inside were tortured. It feels like you are looking at the carcass of a huge bloodthirsty monster that has eaten a lot of people when it was alive. Unfortunately, the prisons of Trikala were not simply closed. They were replaced by ultra-modern prisons in the Thessalian plain, where, whatever protest the prisoners make, will not be heard by anyone, as it would have been when the prisoners were held in the old prisons. Nor can anyone look at the city from his window and take courage to take his sentence. Even visits from relatives and lawyers are rare when a prison is "in the middle of nowhere". For my father's cousin, Giannis Sfalagas, it would have been very easy to visit his imprisoned clients since his house was very close to the prisons. I don't know if it was also the daily sight of prisons when he was young that pushed him to become a lawyer. I had seen this uncle of mine for the last time in 1974, when we had gone with my father's car to Trikala, in order he to vote.

At that time my father had taken me in his car and shown me the building of the eight-grade high school that had been finished. This high school and the neighborhood where my father grew up, Bara, I sought to find after I was left the old prisons. I used for this purpose a map that I bought. Unfortunately, although I found the school complex, this building I had seen in 1974 was not there. Instead of restoring it, they had torn it down. As for the neighborhood, it was now a neighborhood of relatively new single-family homes. I had no other information about exactly where my father had grown up and that's why I didn't continue looking for familiar places. I knew that there were other Kyritsis living in Bara relatives whom we visited every Easter, but we had lost contact, at least since the time my father had died (1980).

From Bara I returned to the center of the city and looked for the castle of Trikala, to which they had taken me when I was young. I found that next to the castle, the Turkish quarter of the city, known as Varusi, was preserved to some extent, i.e. buildings over 130 years old were preserved. On one of them I saw written an anarchist slogan mocking the Christian Easter. This slogan, as well as other anarchist slogans of an anti- nationalist orientation that I later saw in the castle, made me feel very good about being an anarchist. I felt very good, because I could see that anarchism had arrived, and its presence was evident, even in my father's homeland. I had even seen a poster of an anarchist collective posted in the city center by the river, for an event near the river that had now taken place. At that time, the collective "Pyrakanthos" was active in Trikala. I wasn't lucky enough to meet anyone from this collective, but I was lucky enough to find the castle open and from its cafe, from where you can see the whole city at your feet, I saw Trikala for the last time, sipping a Fredocino coffee. From up there I looked back on my life until then and thought that I hadn't fared too badly. If my father were alive, he would be satisfied with me. But such a thing would be terribly difficult, because, if my father were alive, then he would be 92 years old! He didn't even live long enough to see grandchildren. However, out of the three grandchildren he would have met, if he had lived, I managed to take two of them, my children, to see the city where their grandfather was born, whom they never met. I hope, seeing Trikala, they would understand that their grandfather, like their father, was not a villager. This does not mean that anyone from a village is inferior to someone born in a city. It's just me criticizing the culture of the peasant that makes him rude. This culture does not characterize all villagers.

My daughter ends up in the erstwhile squat Termita in Volos and I employ a lawyer in order to rent out her apartment!

The reason that the spring of 2012 would be the last time I would visit my daughter was that this spring my daughter would be leaving the apartment she was renting, and living in a squat, in the Termita squat, whose buildings belonged to the University of Thessaly. My daughter didn't leave her apartment because we didn't have money for the rent. Although the economic crisis that the fascists had exploited to enter the Parliament had also affected me, I had not yet run out of money and therefore I was able to pay my daughter's rent. She left the apartment for her own, personal reasons. When I later ran out of money, as I predicted, this move of hers allowed her to stay in Volos and finish her schooling, which she would not have been able to do if she had left the apartment and returned to Athens due to lack of money. And in this, that is, I was lucky. And I didn't expose myself to my daughter by not being able to provide her with the right conditions to finish her schooling. Now how she managed to study her lessons in such a cramped and messy space like the squat is something to be admired for. She was probably studying in her faculty building which s quite close to the squat. However, I could not visit her, because she did

not live alone. Nor, after all, was there a place for me to live. So, after she moved, I said goodbye to the Volos I was losing, just as the poet Cavafy urged a certain Antonio, perhaps Mark Antonio, to say goodbye to Alexandria, in his poem "Apoliipein o Theos Antonion".

Because this move and the unhooking from the apartment that my daughter was renting, were not at all easy, this goodbye did not cost me anything. First of all it took me weeks of work to make the apartment suitable for the owner to receive, because my daughter, in addition to having enough things to pack, had smeared it with graffiti that sometimes had to be covered with paint, like on the balcony. Even for the air conditioners I had installed in two of her rooms, it took a while for a crew to come and remove them, and I also needed my friend Kyriakos to bring a tall ladder and plaster one of the outer holes in the wall from the air conditioner . I was lucky that Kyriakos lived in Volos. Great personality and very helpful towards me. Even he got an electric shock, when he was on the ladder plastering the hole. Also, in order to move all these things, Sophia's friend had to come from Athens with her car, because it was not possible to load them into a truck and go and spread them in the squat. They had to be moved little by little, to be placed in different parts of the building and in common areas of the complex.

However, it was not only the preparation of the apartment for delivery to the owner and the move that bothered me, though we made around ten rides by car. I was also bothered by the owner himself, who refused to take delivery of the apartment for a whole month. He kept referring to the four-year contract we had, which had not been covered, because the four years had not yet passed. And not only did he not accept the keys to the apartment but, in his communication with my daughter, he threatened to take me to court (the apartment was rented in my name) and confiscate my house in Lefkada! If he were any landlord, his threats would go in one ear and out the other. But he was an elderly lawyer with a long presence in the courts of Volos, which meant that he knew judges there who would probably be kind to him. In order to get rid of him, we also had to hire a lawyer, a lawyer my daughter had met as a lawyer for the movement. I happened to have met her too in the shop of the wife of Giannis, the comrade from Peristeri, who ran a bookstore near the squat of Matsangou. Fortunately, after much negotiation and exchange of documents, our lawyer convinced her colleague and our landlord to take over the apartment, without going to court. I thus lost the guarantee that he had to return to me because we did not cover it, and the money for the lawyer's fee. He won and money of the guarantee and also received an apartment beautiful like a doll. As he confessed to our lawyer, he received the apartment in a better condition than he had delivered it to us.

My life during the time of the bailouts and the lawlessness of Golden Dawn

What was my life like in April 2012? Good, bad? Neither good nor bad. Of course, compared to the lives of billions of others, I could say good, because I did not face problems of shelter, food, clothing, access to education and medical care, things that I believe should be ensured for all people on the planet. However, I cannot say that I was happy, because I neither did what I wanted nor my relationships with those around me were what I wanted. I was also crawling behind situations that others had created and I felt that I had to intervene, either because my own and my family's survival was judged by my intervention or because I felt that, without my intervention, some people who were waiting from me, like my daughter, they would have a problem, because they would have to turn to others, who would not offer them as much as I did. The case of my daughter's move to Termita squat is a typical situation that required me to spend time and money, not by choice.

On the other hand, I was living in an anxiety about the future, because I saw my finances going from bad to worse, because of the financial crisis they had managed to cause for the financially precarious, the financially comfortable with their waste, without it to mean that it was their own initiative. They had also conformed to the recession that hit the European economy, after a period of reckless spending that in Greece culminated in the 2004 Olympics. I mean, when the economic powerful of this country, such as the deep state and the managers of the finances of the system, they saw that they could not continue their waste by relying on the speculation of their European counterparts, combined with the predatory exploitation of foreign immigrants, because their European counterparts were also suffering this recession that follows reckless waste, they pounced on the economically precarious, as are at least one third of the inhabitants of this country. How they pounced? In the usual ways, such as the increases in direct and indirect taxes and contributions (e.g. E.E.T.H.A. i.e. Extraordinary Special Property Electrification Fee, Business Fee, EN.F.I.A. i.e. Uniform Property Ownership Tax, etc.). I, like millions of others, had the misfortune of being financially insecure and with such a predatory attack on us from the state, we took the bottom ride. There were not a few of them, usually descendants of fascists and far-rights who had done the same in their youth, who resorted to organized crime to be able to continue their waste. Thus, the party that was the political expression of organized crime won hundreds of thousands of votes, where previously it could not secure even a few thousand.

This party, the Golden Dawn, at that time was at the height of its criminal activity controlling, backed by the corrupt policemen, the streets of Athens and imposing terror on those who were not on its side. It did this by abusing, stabbing and sometimes even killing immigrants, gypsies, homosexuals and, in general, categories of people who have always been at a disadvantage in society. And I, seeing in what hands Athens was then, did not feel at all comfortable. I knew that in some parts of it I was at the absolute disposal of organized crime, to do with me what

it wanted. I had never felt so insecure before and this added to the stress I was feeling due to the downward spiral my finances had taken. It was not a little to learn every day about immigrants stabbed or beaten brutally, etc., about the corpses of immigrants killed by strangers, about knife attacks on public transportation such as the electric railway and the subway, and to see that the police turned a blind eye, if they weren't doing the exact same thing themselves, torturing these groups of citizens inside police stations. Is it possible, after all this, to say that in April 2012 my life was good and I was happy? Apart from the fact that I was becoming 56 years old and I knew that from day to day I too could get sick and die, like so many others my age. Already our comrade Kokoras, although two years younger, was struggling with hospitals and operations, having fallen seriously ill, while our comrade Bouketsidis, who was the same age as me, had already been dead for seven years.

In short, I did not see the future with optimism. On the contrary, I watched it with concern, not to say fear, and I did not expect anything good. Can anyone think that I was wrong to think so? And yet I was wrong: At that time my life became as interesting as it had ever been in previous years, and became worth living. How? An angel entered my life, as I had said, at that time to my friend and former classmate Kostas. Of course, angels do not exist and even people, whom we see as angels, see them that way because we see them through the distorting mirrors of our imagination. Anyway, angel or human, with all the good and bad that characterize people, him, or rather, her who came into my life was Nancy. A 19-year-old girl whom we had met at an anti-fascist demonstration, when she had come and told us that she had been to Sophia's speech in the erstwhile squat of Patision and Skaramanga, that she liked the speech very much and that is why she had proposed to Sophia to go and speak at other events as well. We later learned that she was living in a squat with the daughter of a childhood friend of mine. In April 2012 we already knew her for a year and more, I think. We used to see her here and there in Exarcheion square and we, mainly Sophia, would exchange a few words with her. When we found out that she was living with the daughter of my childhood friend, we invited them both to our house, to meet in person. So, before April 2012, he and my childhood friend's daughter had made a passage through our house. And that April we had invited them both to our house on Easter day, which fell on April 15, six days after my return from Volos, where I had "given everything" to prepare the house my daughter was renting , for delivery to its owner and to help her to move to the squat.

Easter with our new friend at home and my homeless friend at the national garden

On Easter day Nancy had come to our house alone. At noon that day, after a phone call from him, I was with my homeless friend Louloudis at the self-managed park on Navarinou Street. We were alone in the park and this had made a great impression on me. I was telling my friend that I didn't expect the anarchists to celebrate Easter either, considering that people from the anarchist space were also gathering in the park. Although I preferred to spend that afternoon at my house, where the girl had come to eat with us, than to spend it with my friend, I couldn't say no to him, when he called me, so we met in Navarino Park and then in the National Garden, where, to "celebrate Easter", he turned and smoked a cigarette. Anyway, when I got home the girl was still

there but after a while she left. This day was memorable because, as always, I had put duty before my personal pleasure and spent the afternoon with my homeless friend rather than at home with the girl whom I also found very beautiful. I'm not saying that I didn't spend that day with my family, because my daughter was in Volos and my son had stopped eating with us on Easter. At the "Easter" table only I, Sophia and the girl had sat.

The squat where our new friend lives is evacuated and she is taken to the detention center for immigrants in Petrou Ralli street

On the second day of Easter, on Monday, we were sitting with Sophia at the Rosalia tavern in Exarchia, to eat some souvlaki, and Nancy happened to pass by us, see us and sit for a while, after our invitation, at our table. And then a few days later we found out that the block she lived in had been evacuated by the police and she, along with others, had been arrested. And although the arrested were not detained long at the Security Police Headquarters, where they had been taken after they past by other two police stations, because they were led to a prosecutor and he temporarily released them, Nancy had been detained and taken to the immigration detention center in Petrou Ralli, because she was an immigrant and the papers the cops had found on her were not "okay".

Sophia, like myself, was understandably disturbed by the arrest and detention of the girl who had even come to our house a few days before, and, although she was in Volos in those days, in the Termita squat, she hastily turned back to fight for the release of the girl. So, on the evening of the first day that the girl stayed in Petrou Ralli, at an event held in Exarcheion square for the eviction of the squatters (another squatter had also been vacated that day), Sophia took the floor and called the public to support the girl who was the only one still inside, because she was a foreigner. And in the following days she tried to find her a lawyer and help the girl's mother with the paperwork, with zero results unfortunately. I succeeded, and sent a young lawyer, friend of mine, to see her, which I thought would make her understand that we would not leave her like that. Sophia, in fact, went all the way to Petrou Ralli to see her and was there when, after four days of detention, they released her. That happened because a lawyer of all the squatters, who had been arrested during the eviction of her squat, took care of her.

The best birthday of my life!

On the evening of the day she was released from Petrou Ralli, Sophia invited this girl to stay at our house, since she could not stay again in the recently vacated apartment. In fact, when she accepted, Sophia suggested that she stay at our house for a few more days, until she gets her papers in order, so that she won't go to Petrou Ralli again.

Something, which the girl also accepted. The day the girl first slept in our house was the 25th of April. That day I turned 56 years old. For my birthday, the girl also brought me a CD of an Arab band. On that day, none of us could have imagined how much our lives would be connected, for better or for worse, depending on everyone's perspective. For better, from my point of view.

In the following days we acquainted the girl with Sophia's closest friend, with whose car we came one day to the country house that my brother and I inherited from my mother. In fact, with Sophia's friend's car, I transported some of my mother's things to the girl's squat, since we did not need them and the girl would not live in our house all her life. As soon as she made her papers she would return to the squat, which, it should be noted, had returned to the hands of the squatters and they began to gather there again. Some nights the girl stayed there too, so I thought it was an opportunity to do something to improve her living conditions in the squat, with things we didn't need and with some technical work I did in her flat in the squat.

Our new friend is arrested again and tried for carrying a weapon!

It was not more than five days since Nancy stayed at our house, and she was arrested again. She had gone to the march that the anti-authoritarians do every year to celebrate the so-called Labor Day and as she was returning she was checked near the police station in our neighborhood, where they searched her and found an anesthetic spray. This is how she found herself in the Security Police Headquarters, in Alexandras avenue, better known as G.A.D.A. (General Police Directorate of Attica), where she stayed the night. The next day, together with another young man, in whose bag they had also found something after the demonstration, she was taken to the Autoforo (Court trying under the in flagrante delicto procedure), which was in the Evelpidon court complex. Sophia and I went there to support her.

The courts of Euelpidon, like the other courts that exist in Athens, may be beautiful from a building point of view, but from a service point of view they are a tragedy. The cases to be heard are so many assigned to each bench every day that they are never heard on time and get many adjournments until they are heard. Those that are usually tried have been postponed many times before and the process, when it comes to minor offences, is more of a trial in name than a real trial, because the judges rush to deal with dozens of trials in a few hours. Thus, these trials last a few minutes, during which the president of the court (in Autoforo most judges are women) do not give the accused the opportunity to defend himself properly, talking about the reasons for his arrest. On the other hand, the lawyers adapt to the rush of the judges and defend each defendant with two or three formal legal expressions, while the sentences rain down. The months or years in prison "fall on the heads of the accused like white roasted chickpeas", as it has come to be said. And although

the trials for minor offenses last very little, due to the fact that there are several dozen for each bench, it takes many hours before they are discussed. The defendants spend these hours handcuffed and tied to each other, if they are involved in the same case. And they are guarded by plainclothes policemen, who these years are usually so young and so fashionably dressed that you hardly suspect they are plainclothes cops. They too languish for hours in the corridors or in the forecourt of the courts, until their prisoners are tried. Some prisoners, usually immigrants without papers and without anyone to support them in Greece, present a sad sight, as they are poorly dressed and disheveled, with tired expressions, because they spent many hours or days in the gloomy cells of the Security, and all this time no one has brought them anything necessary to take care of themselves. If they are also accompanied by racist cops, then it is even worse for them, because the cops leave them tied up in the sun for hours, without coffee, without water and without cigarettes. Three such immigrants, one of whom must not have been more than 14 years old, in dirty clothes and flip-flops, I saw waiting that day for hours, without money for water, coffee, or cigarettes, to be tried by the same bench that would try Nancy. Fortunately, the policeman who accompanied them, allowed them to enjoy some coffee offered by some compassionate passers-by.

Nancy came bound with a cop, as did the young man who was to be tried from the same bench, but as time passed without her turn coming, the cop untied her, and she was left handcuffed to a bench beside a canteen in the courtyard of the courts, with the policeman watching her until he was replaced by another cop. All this time we, her mother, her lawyer (the one she had after the eviction), Sophia's best friend and a couple of her friends from her university faculty kept her company. The handcuffs did not "fit" her at all and together with her young age and her beauty made some people, relatives of the people waiting to be tried, feel sorry for her and burst into applause, when after many hours, around five in the afternoon, the trial took place and the girl was acquitted. In this trial, Sophia testified as the only defense witness. The other defendant who was arrested after the demonstration had his father as a defense witness but did not manage to avoid the penalty. He got many months but, at least with a suspended sentence on appeal. He appealed and he was temporarily released. Finally, after the trial, the girl came back and continued to live in our house.

A lawyer who fights anti-Semitism at great personal cost displaces our new friend from our house

By the time Nancy got her paperwork done, time was flying by and three weeks after her arrest she was still sleeping in our house. Until a lawyer from Preveza, whom we had met many months ago, came to our house to host her. Since we had

Beeen acquainted with this lawyer she had received a fierce abusive, insulting and slanderous attack from strangers and acquaintances (even by a journalist of OmniaTV, an internet television station) because she had defended the Jews on the internet. One of the strangers, protected by the anonymity of the internet, was writing such abusive and obscene things about her, that our friend had resorted to the police cybercrime prosecution service. They treated her like the police treat anonymous citizens who report thefts: They told her they want to but can't do anything. Yet! When they go after anyone undesirable to the deep state, like a blogger who satirized a new Greek Orthodox Christian saint, Paisios, they immediately find him and put him in handcuffs. But in this case our friend, the lawyer, was defending the Jews and woe betide the anti-Semitic Golden Dawn police to come to the defense of the defender of the Jews.

This lawyer stayed at our house for the first and last time, but this time was enough for our story with Nancy to start getting complicated. First of all, Sophia told her that, as long as the lawyer stayed in our house, Nancy could not stay in our house, because the lawyer would take her place. And then at some Anti-Prohibition Festival (for the legalization of Indian hemp) that happened around that time, Sophia didn't come with us, namely me, the lawyer, and Nancy, who went together there by the car of Sophia's friend. And when the lawyer left, after about a week, Sophia moved the bed, where the lawyer slept and Nancy had slept, from the living room to my son's room, showing that she no longer wanted to host Nancy. She, until the end of that month and the beginning of the next, spent a few nights at our house and slept on a sofa in the living room.

Public shaming of socially weak women in the name of public health's protection

In that period, the deep state fronted by Loverdos, a government minister, decided to reinforce the racist propaganda of the rising Golden Dawn by launching a campaign of women who were socially weak or addicted to banned substances, as if they were prostitutes that endangered all society because, according to the police, they were carriers of the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) virus. At the bringing of these unfortunate women to the prosecutor, in order to imprison them for the good of society, several of their sympathizers, including myself and Sophia, as well as Nancy, were present. The arraignment lasted hours until the prosecutor decided to imprison them, regardless of whether they had committed any crime. All these hours, hundreds of us supporters were in the yard of the courts on Evelpidon Street. I remember that already my relations with Sophia had begun to cool. I don't remember exactly when they started but certainly after I announced to Sophia that I intended to get Nancy a computer, because hers had been confiscated, as she told us, by the police

during the eviction of the squat. She was a student at the Polytechnic University (N.T.U.A.) and that's why she needed it. And when one evening we were in Exarcheion square, to watch an event of support for the "HIV positive" (those who, according to the police, are carriers of the AIDS virus), Sophia lashed out at the girl, because her mother had called Sophia, to protest that her daughter was hanging out with me.

A strong shock to my relations with my wife for a trivial reason that could have been avoided – My son got into university

That night was also the last of the friendship between Sophia and this girl. Specifically, after the event, Sophia suggested that we go to a tavern to eat with a doctor, who was among the speakers at the event, and the doctor's husband, who was Sophia's dentist. She volunteered to come also Sophia's friend who had also come to the event, and also Nancy at my invitation. So we all went to the tavern together, where the doctor, a doctor in charge of testing people suspected of AIDS and other communicable diseases in a large state hospital, informed us in detail about the case of the "HIV positive" which was the subject of her work and had also examine a porn customer cop who had been with one of them. After the tavern, and while the others went together towards our house, I accompanied Nancy for ten minutes to the squat, where she would sleep that night, and told her about a feast I had arranged with Sophia's friend at her house the other day which was the girl's birthday. That was the last straw for Sophia and when I got home she told me that I exposed her with my attitude to the doctors and from then on Nancy was over for her. In short, she would not allow her to come home again, which infuriated me, because from then on it would be very difficult, if not impossible, for my friendship with this girl to continue, due to the age difference between us and how the world would see us. I thought I had the right to have a young woman as a friend, not just men as friends because I was old.

The next day in the afternoon, Sophia's friend called me and told me that the girl's birthday party would not take place, because she had found out that Sophia had problems with her. That's what she said to the girl when she called her, causing her to disappear. That night or the next, I left Athens and came to my country house without giving signs of life for two whole days, which made Sophia seriously worried and start looking for me. I did it on purpose to show her how badly she had treated me in the past, when she had taken my daughter and left our house for a week, without giving any signs of life, because of my friendship with the Lefkadian journalist. I was beginning to resent the fact that with our new friend I was watching the story of the then, now departed, Anna, repeat itself. I would lose another friend who this time was not a year older than me, like Anna but much younger than me, young and beautiful!

And yet this unpleasant development could have been avoided if a rent reduction contract that I had delivered to some of my tenants had been signed on time and not unreasonably delayed. If they had signed it in time, I would have left for Lefkada for business and the girl would have left for Patras, as she planned. But luck plays a key role in life and in this case I was unlucky. Not that sooner or later we wouldn't end up where we did. It's just that the commotion would have been postponed, at least until I returned from Lefkada, and by then the tension would have subsided somewhat. Finally, my tenants signed when it was too little, too late and I left for Lefkada, having clashed with Sophia and having lost the girl too. One last thing I would like to add at this point, is that during those months when we were hosting people at home, my son was studying his ass off to pass the so-called Panhellenic exams, in order to get into the university. From his own point of view he would say "Nero fiddles while Rome burns". Fortunately, he had his own room, he had also done two years of tutoring and finally, with these exams, he passed to the Faculty of Geology at the University of Athens, which he chose among those where he could be enrolled, with the grades he had obtained in the exams.

My efforts to get my new friend to continue her studies

So in the middle of June 2012 I found myself back in Lefkada, full of bitterness and indignation after the last events. Luckily Nancy's disappearance didn't last long. Three days later since she disappeared, not even answering her mobile phone, she picked up this phone, where I continued to call her, and told me that she was in Patras and that her phone, all this time, was out of charge because she had not the charger with her! Of course, that day when I found out that our friendship was not over for good, I was so happy, as I have rarely been in my life. And while I stayed in Lefkada we had frequent communication, even when she had returned to Athens and was living in the squat again.

When I was returning by bus from Lefkada to Athens in the same month, I happened to have a foreigner from an Eastern European country behind me, who worked in a bar in a seaside, touristic village in Lefkada, she lived in the owner's house, her the passport had been stolen and she was coming to Athens to go to her embassy to replace it. She was alone in the seat and in the middle of the journey a customer of the bar came and sat next to her, who in addition to questioning her (as a result of which I learned the story I wrote above) also turned the tables on her because she did not have date him and had turned down his invitations while she was working at the bar. He was old and snotty-faced, while she was young, and I felt sorry for her that she had got involved out of necessity with such people. But this story made me, when I saw Nancy again, prevent her from going to work in a cafe-bar in a tourist village in Evoia, in order not to suffer the same and worse than what the girl who worked in Lefkada had suffered.

After all, Evoia was known for the most heinous gang rape that had become known in Greece, the rape of the foreign schoolgirl in Amarynthos. In order that she might not go to Evoia, I had offered to lend her some money, to see her off until the fall, when she would return them to me when the schools would begin and she would begin private lessons for students. I also managed to convince her to carry out an earlier plan of hers: To change faculty in the Polytechnic Univercity (N.T.U.A.), since with the grades she had collected in the nationwide exams there was a possibility that she would succeed, being admitted within the 10% of all those admitted to the new faculty. In order to do this, she needed to submit an application online, but she did not have internet or a computer in her possession. I had thought then to see if I could have internet on my laptop in an internet cafe. I had never done it before and didn't know how easy it is. That's why one afternoon I found myself in the coffee shop of the Hontos building, in Omonia, from where I had a nice view. And I actually had internet on my computer there. While I was there, Nancy from called me from the G.A.D.A. and told me that they had arrested her again, because they had evacuated the squat again. Fortunately this time they let her go, because they consulted her file from the previous arrest when, after three days in Petrou Ralli, she had been released. I also went and found her as she was returning from the G.A.D.A. to Exarchia. That same night, the building that had been vacated by the squatters was reoccupied but the girl was not in the mood to sleep there again and slept with a friend of hers. I didn't like her living in the apartment building either, because there was also an elderly man living in this apartment building, who had a history of convictions for trafficking in prohibited substances. He was the same one, about whom the tortured gypsy prisoner in Corfu prison, Apostolopoulos, whom I had met in Aegina prison in 1978, had told me to watch out for. How can I imagine that I would find him again in front of me after 1986, when I had first seen him in Propylaea and he had taken the loudspeaker that we used to mobilize the people for the imprisoned anti-nuclear demonstrators! This guy saw my friendship with this girl with half an eye and in order to spoil it, he told her a lot of lies, such as that Sophia called her vulgar names in front of others, that she had been watched, etc. She believed him, maybe because until then she had met other such people and no one had been around to tell her how dangerous they were.

Of course, one will wonder how it reached his ears that Sophia did not like my friendship with the girl at all and that the latter did not even want to see her. Anyway, it was not a healthy squatting environment and I didn't like that the girl was forced to live there. And, as she said herself, she didn't like it either.

The anti-racist festival of July 2012, an unexpected night phone call and two fraudulent air conditioner repairmen

In those days, at the beginning of July, the anti-racist festival that takes place every year took place and I was there every day, holding together with Nasos Theodoridis, the Anti-Nationalist Movement's table. And since Nancy was an immigrant, I had suggested that she make a pass at the festival, since immigrants didn't pay at that festival, like everyone else. My invitation was accepted and Nancy appeared in front of our table

the second day, Saturday. I introduced her as my friend to acquaintances, such as the first president of the Association of Conscientious Objections Lazaros Petromelidis and our colleague in Anti-Nationalist Movement Alexia and, later, we ate together from the international cuisine of the festival. In fact, we left together from the festival that was then held near the Katehaki metro station, in the old Military Police's facilities. That night she would go to stay at the squat. I, however, already on the day of the second evacuation, had told her that if she couldn't find anything better, she could also stay in my cottage.

Anyway, I got back to my house late after midnight and fell asleep. It must have been three or four in the morning when my cell phone rang and I heard the girl asking me to stay at my cottage. I told her there was no night bus to there and the first bus was around six in the morning. She asked me to meet to give her the keys and I told her that she couldn't go alone, because she had never taken the bus to there before, the house was old and she didn't know its "secrets", she was unknown to the neighbors and would cause trouble, etc. So I convinced her to go together. Indeed, I went and found her at the bus departure point in a bad state of mind, the cause of which I never learned. We took the first bus that was full of workers, mostly Albanians, going to work, even though it was Sunday. I felt like we were sticking out like a sore thumb. And, for the first time, the bus did not follow the normal route but went to its destination by making a long circuit through neighboring villages. And shortly before we arrived from the new, unknown to me route, it stopped on the road for ten minutes without the driver telling us why. I had to get up from my seat and go to ask him if, after all, we would end up at our destination, as we did. During that stop, Sophia also called me and asked me what happened and why I left in the morning without telling her anything. I found an indigestible excuse for rushed maintenance work at the cottage, since I had to be at the anti-racist that same afternoon and didn't have time. What should I say to her? That I was with her former friend that she didn't want to see?

Once we got home there was another problem. Because I turned on two air conditioners and a water heater at the same time, there was an explosion in the electrical panel and the fuse also blew. Opening the panel I saw that some thick wires leading the the fuse base had burned out and if I didn't find a way to replace them, there would be no power to the house. Since it was a Sunday and the house was not in a city, I couldn't bring an electrician either. But I found an electrical shop already open and got some cables, but not the ones I wanted. I worked for hours and it was so hot that I still remember it. It was July and later, when July was over, the newspapers wrote that it had been the hottest July in the last hundred years! I, too, may have shed rivers of sweat, but the only thing I managed was for the house to have light. Every time we plugged in an appliance, the circuit breaker tripped. After all that, shouldn't I stay with the girl until we see what happens? And yet I didn't stay. Having asumed the political obligation to hold

the Anti- Nationalist Movements' table at the festival, I put, as usual, my political obligations above my personal ones and returned to Athens. And I went back to the festival, even though I was dead tired, because I had only slept three hours in the last 48 hours. What gave me strength to continue was, probably, the trust the girl had shown in me and her courage to continue being my friend.

Although I repaired the damage to the electrical panel of my cottage after three days, because there was another holiday, apart from Sunday, the large air conditioner in the living room did not put out cold air again and the heat was unbearable. On a pillar near the house I found a sign with a phone that said air conditioner service for 20 euros. Forgetting one reliable technician I had used nine years earlier, I called that number and two young men appeared at the house, in an old car, one of whom had a few teeth missing and was very thin, as if he was on drugs. They couldn't fix the air conditioner, but I gave them the money for the service. Over the next few days I made some phone calls and found someone who supposedly had parts for the air conditioner but was asking for a wad of money to come to the cottage. So I called the guys and asked them if they would take care of transporting the parts and installing them. Those didn't want anything else. They came, removed two Printed Circuit Boards from the air conditioner, to compare them with the new ones they would get, took 130 or 140 euros to pay for the new boards and disappeared. On the other hand, when I called again to the person who would sell me the new boards, he told me that he did not have them and had not been able to find them. So I basically wasted 160 or 170 euros by trusting scammers and an air conditioning dealer who also turned out to be completely unreliable. The result was that I spent a July with terrible heat and even with a female guest, as if she had brought me bad luck. Of course, the guest didn't spend all the days of July at the cottage, because she was going back and forth to Athens, where she lived in the squat, but I didn't like that an air conditioner that I had for 19 years broke, when I had to host the girl.

An unexpected meeting some time after an anti-Semitic demonstration

Otherwise, I managed to find a computer with internet for the girl at the house of a friend of mine, Vasia, whom I had met after an antispeciesist demonstration against the fur trade, which had taken place at the Syntagma Square. Before the start of the march, one of the demonstrators, tall and bulky, had grabbed the anti-fur leaflets that a girl was handing out and thrown them into the fountain in the square. He did this because the notices had the symbol of the organization that issued the notices and that symbol had the Greek flag. The organization was not nationalist, but because it had branches in many countries of the world, it had for each branch a symbol with the flag of its country, to stand out from the others. The tall man did not

understand this and made the girl cry. In fact, when she found another package with the same notices to hand out, the tall man threw them into the fountain as well. There must have been about a hundred people in the gathering, almost all of them young. I was the oldest and the shortest, but since no one stood up for the girl who was crying, I got into it with the tall guy, telling him that if I knew I'd get almost four years in prison, so they could do their shit people like him for an old flag, i'd rather not have gone to jail. The fight fortunately did not result in a beating, because he was restrained by his friends and I was removed by some Jehovah's Witnesses, who happened to be distributing their material in the square. Vasia had witnessed the scene I described, and after some time, when she happened to see me on a street, she congratulated me for my attitude and from then on we had some communication, sporadically. At her house, Nancy made her online application to change faculties and she was accepted. In fact, when the results of the Panhellenic exams were announced at the end of August, I learned that she had been admitted to the school she had chosen, with the 10%.

Nancy learned that she got into that faculty from me, when I was in Komotini and she called me. I can't say that she had much interest in studies. She seemed to like the life she led without them. I, at that time, was in Komotini for the first time in my life, as I was in Thrace, in general.

MY JOURNEY TO THRACE AND TURKEY

A "celebratory" welcome at Kavala airport by my "teachers"

I made up my mind and went to Thrace, intending to continue to Istanbul with my friend and comrade in the Anti-Nationalist Movement Mustafa, because I could see myself sinking financially and, if I hadn't taken that trip back then, I wouldn't have had the money to do it later. And I did very well, because, not only my money ran out later, but also my friends and comerades, Abdulhalim and Mustafa, after a few months stopped having much to do with each other, and each of them was burdened with a series of personal problems. Even the date I went was the right one, because he happened to have come from Japan, together with a Greek colleague of his in the anti-racist and anti-fascist struggle, who had come from Germany, a Turkish professor from Osaka University, for a linguistic research. The two worked together at Germany's famous anti-racist immigrant organization Café Morgenland, before the Turk found himself in Japan. For me the texts of this organization were the best anti-racist texts and I liked them so much that I hid some admiration for them. Life brought me to meet two of its most important executives, the ones I mentioned above, in the most pleasant way. They picked me up in their car from Kavala airport, where my plane that had left Athens landed, and took me to Xanthi, the first stop of this unforgettable trip. Xanthi and Komotini, because they have a large Turkish minority, were considered unsuitable for the creation of an airport and suitable for the creation of police schools for Greeks. In fact, in those days throughout Greece, the police carried out a "sweep" operation against the immigrants, whom they always considered garbage, and the immigrants were taken, without being given permission to defend themselves, to improvised concentration camps. The police schools of Xanthi and Komotini had been turned into such camps and policemen from all over Greece, together with Greek far-right and fascists from Thrace, had taken it upon themselves to guard the prisoners.

In Xanthi we had made an appointment with Abdulhalim, who, at my request, would mediate so that the Turkish professor could find the right people for his research. His research was about racism in language, and Turkish minorities were needed to take part. Abdulhalim found them, because he was well known in Thrace, because of a minority newspaper he published, Trakya'nin Sesi (Turkish Voice). Abdulhalim had also suggested the exact date of my trip, so that I could attend the most important annual cultural event of the Turkish minority in Xanthi prefecture. Abdulhalim took me there in his car and my friends from Café Morgenland also came there.

An impressive annual event in a minority village for a Turkish audience

The event was held at the stadium of the minority village of Ketenlik, which the Greek state renamed Centauros, to hide the fact that it is a village of Turkified Bulgarians known as Pomaks. It has done the same with all the Pomaki and Turkish villages of Thrace. I had never been to a minority event before and my knowledge of minorities was purely theoretical. The fact that I was at this event and even as an "official", because Abdulhalim secured me a place among the "officials", I considered it as a reward for my anti-nationalist struggle for the recognition of the human, political and social rights of the Turkish minority. And, knowing this minority intimately, through its cultural characteristics, I realized that I had done very well and had been active for its rights as long as I had been active. In this particular event the content was dances and songs, both traditional and contemporary, by singers who had come from Turkey. There had even been various children's plays. But their traditional dances were danced mainly by children and teenagers who, to tell the truth, are much more beautiful than their Greek peers, especially the girls. Even the traditional Turkish clothes worn by girls and women made them look more beautiful.

Now, the language spoken at the event was mainly Turkish. And representatives of the Turkish state also participated, such as the consul and a certain mayor of a large city in Turkey, from which a band had come to dance. Of course, someone, or rather some young lady, translated into Greek, although I didn't see any Greeks come to see the event. Overall it was a very nice experience. The only thing I didn't like is that, at some point, around 9pm, the event was interrupted so that the officials could go and say their prayers on some mats that had been spread out behind the stage. This religious fanaticism, along with Sharia, i.e. the Islamic law that allows girls to marry before the age of sixteen, which many adhere to, are in my view the inherent weaknesses of the Turkish minority, which the Greek state it does not fight, because they tie the minority behind the chariot of religion and sexism and prevent it from modernizing. Finally, something else of minor importance but for me annoying that I did not like, was the absence of alcohol at the event. Fortunately, behind closed doors, many members of the minority do drink and that's why you could get beers outside the stadium, where the event was taking place. And when we say outside, we don't mean on the street but in a building next to the stadium's locker room that would probably serve as a warehouse. There I also saw various Turks sitting around and drinking, perhaps so that the religious and political leaders would not see them and lay hands on them. I didn't see women and girls drinking alcohol... I, however, drank several beers but unfortunately I drank them too late, an hour before the end of the event. And I also ate some traditional Turkish food and sweets. If everything that had happened lately in Athens had not intervened, I would certainly have felt, at least for those days that they were among the best of my life.

Translated from Greek to English - www.onlinedoctranslator.com

With my anti-racist friend at Ketenlick festival

I learn about Pomaks by listening and talking to Pomaks

In Ketenlik, Lutvi, Abdulhalim's son-in-law, was also a municipal councilor. Very natural since he was originally from the area and knew people and things well. It was from him that I first heard what is known as the language of the Pomaks, as he was talking to his mother on the phone. From what I could gather, this language was Slavic and not Turkish. Most likely it was some Bulgarian dialect. From this language I concluded that the Pomaks must be Turkicized Bulgarians. Abdulhalim's own son-in-law, a very good boy who the next day showed me around the beautiful old town of Xanthi, with its beautiful Ottoman buildings, and then took me to a well-known Turkish restaurant some distance from the town, explained to me why the Pomaks were turkicized. This happened because while Greece treated them for too many years as second-class citizens, as it treated all minorities, Turkey treated them as Turks, providing them with all the opportunities it gives to Turks. He himself had studied in Ankara, something he could not do in Athens (where even Greeks need tuition money to enter university), although he had served in the Hellenic army and he had to put up with all the anti-Turkish nationalism that the Greek army indoctrinates its soldiers with. To show me how difficult military service was for him

because of his nationality, he told me that he was once summoned by the commandant of his camp to punish him because he had told about a fellow countryman who had been upset by the anti-Turkish Greek soldiers, that he became a Turk. This was seen as questioning the "Greekness" of the Turk serving in the Greek army, and Abdulhalim's son-in-law had a hard time trying to explain to his superior that "became a Turk" meant that he became enraged and not that he ceased to feel Greek willing to fight for Greece!

Visit to the minority village of Echinos and the tomb of an Ottoman noblewoman

But it was not only Abdulhalim's son-in-law who made me feel that I was among my own people, as much as I was among Thracian Turks. And Abdulhalim himself the day after, probably, the cultural event in Ketenlik, picked me and my two friends from Café Morgenland up and took us outside of Xanthi, to a tavern on the banks of a river, which ran a fish farm there with trout. There I ate fresh trout for the first time, because the trout we ate (that's why he took us anyway) were caught at that time from the fish farm.

In the trout tavern from left to right the professor, Abdulhalim, me and Lutvi

And while I stayed in Xanthi, Abdulhalim wanted to entertain all the time. Only once did he allow me to pay, because I insisted in order to "get out of the obligation".

But the most memorable tour that Abdulhalim gave me was a tour in his car in the north of Xanthi prefecture, during which we reached the largest and most famous

town in the region which, although inhabited exclusively by the Turkish minority, is known by its Greek name Echinos. There he took me to a cafe, where he was known as he was known throughout Thrace, and introduced me to other Turks. Their kindness and care towards me eliminated the last remnants of suspicion towards the Turks, with which the Greek education system had been instilling in me since I first went to school.

Opposite Echino, on a hill, there is a sight that to go with Abdulhalim, we had to cross with his car the bed of a stream that still had water. It is the tomb of an Ottoman noblewoman of the 15th century, whose husband is buried in one of the great mosques of Echinos. The building where the tomb is located is open to the public and there I saw an Ottoman tomb for the first time in my life. What impressed me the most was the green color of the cloth with which the tomb was covered. Later, in Istanbul, I had the opportunity to find that this was the case with all the stately Ottoman tombs. I also attribute the fact that the flag of Saudi Arabia is green to the importance of the green color for Muslims. Also, from where the tomb is, there is a great view of the city. The city from above looks very beautiful with its mosques and minarets. Even the Ottoman cemetery at its entrance is impressive. I, hearing for so many years about the poor and backward Turks of Thrace, could not imagine that they would have cared for their cities so much as to make them so attractive. But, from what Abdulhalim told me, many of them had been emigrants and with the money they made, they took care of their homes and their cities.

The Greek army still guards the bar that imprisoned the Pomaks in their villages

After Ehinos, Abdulhalim took me to show me the spot where, until recently, until 1996 I think, there was a bar guarded by soldiers on the main road, which connected the Turkish and Pomakian villages (and towns like Ehinos) with the rest of the prefecture and the rest of Greece. At the bar, a check was made to see if the residents of the area where these villages are located, near the Greek-Bulgarian border, had permission from the police and the army to travel. If the army and the police did not want them, they did not give them permits and they remained imprisoned in their own country. In fact, from those of them who succeeded and got permits and then they went to Turkey, which is nearby, the state took away their Greek citizenship, with the result that since that time there have been many without any citizenship and to this day, they have a lot of problems with the state. Only after the abolition of the bar, which was not the only one because there were bars on all the roads that connected the bordering Turkish and Pomaki villages with the rest of Greece, was the deprivation of citizenship for those Turks visiting Turkey also abolished. And although the bars have been removed, the presence of the military is strong in the area, as I found out with my own eyes when I went to photograph the location of the bar and a nearby military building that looked abandoned: Out of nowhere, a soldier jumped out and he asked for my cell phone to delete the photos I

took, while he also wanted to arrest me. I told him that I didn't take any photos and before giving it to him, I managed to delete a couple of photos that I had taken, while Abdulhalim, to leave us alone, showed him his ID, told him that he is a well-known journalist from Thrace and showed him, also copies from the newspaper he used to publish. So I got rid of it, but I was left with an indelible taste of the military dictatorship, which still reigns in the minority villages.

In the afternoon and evening of that day, Abdulhalim and I visited the cafe in the square of another beautiful Turkish village, where again Abdulhalim found acquaintances who entertained us. Of course, they did not treat us to any beer or ouzo, because they are Muslims and, in public at least, they only drink tea or coffee, but even the tea they treated us to, was extremely delicious, because they prepare it in their own way and serve it in very small glasses. And the view from the village cafe which was on a slope, was amazing. And from what I learned then, there are no Greeks in these villages and that's why you don't see churches. Only mosques that are all so beautiful. Of course, in every village there is also a small church, to remind the minorities who is in charge in this place, even if there are no Greeks to operate them. Abdulhalim during the tour also took me to a village, where the state had recently built a small church, without there being even one Greek in the village, just to make its presence felt. And this is because in many villages there are not even police stations.

Reception by friend and comerade Mustafa at the beautiful cafe of the Turkish Youth Union of Komotini - "Pilgrimage" to Ahmet Sadik's grave

From Xanthi, after a few days, I went to Komotini. Abdulhalim took me in his car and he also found Mustafa for me in the Turkish cafe he frequented. This cafe belonged to a Turkish cultural association that had been established since 1928, but for many years the courts have banned its operation because of the word "Turkish" in its name. If I'm not mistaken, it's called the Turkish Union of Komotini Youth. And because it was a haunt of Turks, a few days before I went to Komotini, it had been attacked by members of the Golden Dawn. Nevertheless, the Turkish minority did not give up and continued to frequent. Besides, it was very cheap. The cheapest coffee shop in Komotini, I could say. And it also had a very nice courtyard with tall trees that provided shade all day long. It was also slightly raised from the ground. In short, it was a nice and cheap coffee shop and that's why, while I stayed in Komotini, I went there every day and found Mustafa. Mustafa, when we went and found him with Abdulhalim, was still working at Abdulhalim's newspaper. But since I came back to Athens, he stopped his collaboration with Abdulhalim and since then they have not collaborated again. I just about caught up and found them still working together, that is. How quickly things change!

With Mustafa, as I said before, I had arranged to go to Istanbul together but, before we went, I also got to know Komotini a little. Komotini does not have an old town, like Xanthi, but it has more Turks. It goes without saying that the Turks are financially in a much worse fate than the Greeks, something that you can see from where everyone lives. The new apartment buildings are inhabited by Greeks who, in order to provoke the Turks, put Greek flags on their balconies, while many Turks live on the outskirts of the city, in a neighborhood with one-story houses and narrow streets reminiscent of the old slums of Athens. And yet, the Turks take so much care of their houses and their streets that this neighborhood seems to be maintained as a tourist attraction. A little outside of this settlement is the Turkish cemetery. There I went with Mustafa and visited the grave of the unforgettable Ahmed Sadiq.

Me in front of the grave of the heroic independent Turkish minority MP Ahmet Sadik

Sadik was a doctor who, together with a certain Faikoglou, had been elected as an independent member of parliament from the Turkish minority, was hunted by the Greek deep state, He was imprisoned at some point and, in the end, lost his life while speeding in his car on the national highway, when a tractor driven by a Greek man suddenly pulled out in front of him. Sadiq was killed in the collision, while his family, who was with him, ended up seriously injured in the hospital. After Sadik and Faikoglou, no independent MP was re-elected from the minority, because the government changed the electoral law with consequence, in order to be an independent MP, you had to get at least 3% of the votes nationwide, which it was impossible for an independent, minority MP candidate.

The aggressive follower of the Golden Dawn in the café of Mustafa's uncle - With International Amnesty's representatives in a restaurant of the Turkish religious endowments

With Mustafa, I also visited twice the cafe of an uncle of his who was my age. The coffee shop was old and not crowded at all, but the uncle was very caring and we spent pleasant hours there drinking raki and eating snacks that the uncle made. In fact, once, the uncle was convinced by Mustafa and sang some songs for us, while Mustafa accompanied him with a tubeleki. Even Mustafa sang. The only unpleasant memory I had of my visits to the uncle's cafe was my argument with a follower of the Golden Dawn, former classmate of Mustafa, who had seated himself at a table and had started a conversation with Mustafa and his uncle, claiming that the Turks they have no place in Greece and should leave and go to Turkey. He did not listen to us, no matter how much we assured him, that the Turks in Thrace existed long before the Greek state was founded. Mustafa's poor uncle had a hard time trying to make him leave and rid us of his fascist propaganda.

In Komotini, while I stayed there, Alexia, the comrade from the Anti-nationalist Movement and executive of the Greek section of Amnesty International, also appeared. She had come together with another representative of Amnesty, a very good boy, Koussa Bahrami, to check the detention conditions of the immigrants in the police schools of Komotini and Xanthi. With her, Kusa and a couple who were hosting them, we went one night to a very cheap Turkish restaurant with excellent Turkish food. Its only problem was that there alcohol wasn't served. It belonged to the Muslim church (waquf) and it would be unthinkable to serve alcohol. Instead of alcohol, I drank, for the first time, airani. I confess that I liked it so much that I did not feel strongly the absence of alcohol as an accompaniment to the food.

In Turkey by Turkish bus together with the Turkish member of the minority, my friend and comrade Mustafa Tsolak

Few days after I appeared in Komotini, me and Mustafa took the bus of a Turkish company, which ran routes between Athens and Istanbul, and we left for Istanbul. The ticket was very cheap because Komotini is relatively close to Istanbul and the bus was owned by a Turkish company. I think it was 15 euros to go and 18 to return. The bus, of course, was full of Turks. Greeks visit Istanbul by plane. The drive took a few hours, and with the stop at the border, it was already dark by the time we arrived at the big bus station outside Istanbul. Before nightfall, looking out of the bus window, I could tell that I was in Turkey by the minarets of the mosques of the cities and villages that the road passed by. And, of course, from the road signs that were

in Turkish.

At the long-distance bus station in Istanbul, where we ended up, it was full of people, because buses from many other parts of Turkey and abroad were ending up there. And from there we needed to take another bus to go to the city center, specifically to Taksim Square, near which was the hotel, which I had booked from Komotini, before we left. Because there were so many people, the buses to the city center that came every half an hour filled up immediately, there was no queue, so it was a matter of luck when you got on a bus. You could wait hours like that. Fortunately, Mustafa knew where to stand and we made it and only had a short wait. If I had gone alone I wouldn't even know how to get from there to the center. But even if I had known, I wouldn't have had the courage to "fight" for a position. Already from that moment I understood how wise my decision was to come to Istanbul with Mustafa who knew the Turkish language, as well as the localities, because he had come to Istanbul many times before.

When we arrived at Taksim Square, we had to walk to Istiklal Avenue which is the most central avenue starting from Taksim and is a pedestrian street that, all day long, is full of people. The hotel was located in a lane in Taksim and although we had the address, we nearly killed ourselves trying to find it, because, on the lane of Istiklal, was its bar which operated independently of the hotel as an Irish pub (it served Irish beers). Fortunately, with Mustafa's questions, we sorted it out, entered the bar, crossed it and found ourselves at the hotel reception. The receptionist wanted all the money up front, for the duration of our stay but with a lot of effort we managed to give him only a part. However, the room he gave us was of a bad quality. It didn't even have a window, so we had to have the light on day and night. At least, if I remember correctly, it had air conditioning, because it was still August and without it we would have suffered. Besides, we would not stay a long time. Mustafa didn't have enough money and that's why we would only stay four days.

I find that Athens is a big village compared to Istanbul

Having heard all my life about the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul but also being curious to see the Topkapi Palace up close, because I had also seen the movie of the same name and knew it was close to the Hagia Sophia, I asked Mustafa and we went to them the next day in the morning. These are located in the Sultanahmet district, which I could say is the most beautiful of the city and has the most visitors, as it gathers the most famous attractions. From Taksim Square, to get there, you take the only metro line that Istanbul has, and it takes you down from above where Taksim is, to the coastal road, from where the boats for the islands of the Sea of Marmara leave. From there you take a tram. When you descend to the relevant stand, you must be a little unconscious if you are not impressed by the beauty of the scenery around you. The attractions are many and very big and the people who come to see them, come from all parts of the world. Among the

buildings of exceptional architectural value that you see around you, there are large parks and huge pedestrian streets, such as the one that passes in front of the famous Blue Mosque and was a racecourse in Roman times. If you are from Greece and grew up in Athens, like me, you understand that Athens, in front of Istanbul, is a village, not because of the extent of Istanbul, because Athens is also quite extensive, but because Istanbul gathers many masterpieces of many centuries that show that for many centuries it was the center of great civilizations. On the contrary, Athens, except for a few large and imposing buildings built by the Philhellenic foreign architects of the 19th century, and most of them are concentrated in the center defined by Syntagma and Omonia, it is nothing more than an ocean of apartment buildings without any architectural value that look alike. And this happens because on the one hand, when Athens became the capital of the Greek state, the archaeologists undertook to eliminate everything that was not left from ancient Greece, and reminded that many peoples and many cultures passed through Athens, and on the other hand the beautiful low buildings that had been built during the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, they were demolished after the war, to give way to multi-storey, ungraceful apartment buildings that solved the acute housing and social problem, which was created by the wars, from the Asia Minor Campaign to the civil war of 1946-1949.

The old Ottoman palace of Istanbul with the "High Gate": Topkapi

Anyway, contrary to what a Greek would do, due to the brainwashing he has undergone since childhood, to consider Hagia Sophia Greek, I did not visit Hagia Sophia first, but Topkapi. You enter this palace through a very high gate, which is probably why the Ottoman government that was in power until the creation of the Turkish state, in 1923, was known as the High Gate. Outside the palace there are many tourist shops with souvenirs, as everywhere in such places. From these I made sure to get a t-shirt with the color and symbols of the Turkish flag, knowing that if I ever wore it in Athens, I would be the target of the nationalist mob that Athens has plenty of. Although I find flags 'dripping blood' this shirt attracted me because it had the 'charm of the forbidden'.

The building complex that housed the sultan and his harem within the palace area (where there are many buildings) also had this charm. That's why I didn't want to leave Topkapi without seeing it. But, as if they did it on purpose, when I went to see it it was closed to the public, just like when my brother went some years ago. At least I saw the other buildings and got a taste of Arab and Ottoman art, since in Greece which was part of the Ottoman Empire for about four hundred years, the buildings of Arab and Ottoman architecture, the nationalists fond of ancient Greece who ruled the Greek state, managed to demolish them (the majority) so as not to remind them of their real history, as they did with the buildings of the so-called Frankish Empire.

Furthermore these buildings, if they survived, would disprove the myth that the Turks were uneducated and uncivilized barbarians!

One last thing that impressed me in this palace was its view. It is located high and from there you can see from above the sea that surrounds the tip of the peninsula, where the city is built, and the opposite Asian side of the city and the great bridge that joins Europe with Asia. The sultan who built Topkapi (Mehmed II the Conqueror) and the later ones who adorned it with the buildings you see today, I guess intended it to be heaven on earth for them.

The disappointing, given its reputation, once christian-orthodox church of Hagia Sophia and the impressive 'Blue Mosque' - The Royal Tombs and Yerebatan

Contrary to the beauty of the Arab and Ottoman architecture and decoration that impressed me in Topkapi, the Hagia Sophia church attracted my interest only for its volume and its long history. If it didn't have the four minarets around it that the Greeks dream of tearing down one day (!), it wouldn't have anything attractive. Nothing to do with the impressive cathedrals of the capitals of Europe, such as London, Paris, Rome, and even Milan. And inside, the decor was pretty poor. If it didn't have the Arab works, we would say that the interior of the temple is bare of decoration. Perhaps at the time it was built and in the following years it was decorated with Byzantine-style frescoes, but few of them have been discovered. Most of them were covered when Hagia Sophia was converted from a Christian temple to a mosque before it became a museum in the 20th century. And one last thing about Hagia Sophia: Due to its reputation as the largest church of the Christian Orthodox and the cathedral of the Byzantine Empire, it has so many visitors that you have to sit in line for hours to see it. Fortunately, on the day I went to see it, it was raining sporadically, so the queues weren't that long. I was also lucky in this case, like when I went to see the Palace of Versailles. And then we didn't have to wait hours in line, due to rain!

More interesting than the once Christian church of Hagia Sophia I found the Blue Mosque, as the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, which is opposite the Hagia Sophia, is known and is considered the largest and most beautiful mosque in the city. In order to enter the courtyard we did not have to wait in line, but we did have to wait for the end of some prayer that takes place there at regular intervals. We also had to put some nylon bags in our shoes, in order not to dirty the huge carpet that covers the floor of the mosque. Good thing they didn't force us to take them off. Of course, anyone who wants to take them off can do it given that there are special places for them at the entrance of the mosque. Now, as far as the interior of the mosque is concerned, it also had no particular decoration, like the Christian temples, especially the Catholic ones, probably because the Muslim priests, the imams, did not need to impress their believers with their art, in order to keep them near them, as the Catholic priests

needed, after the religious reformation, and therefore they financed art in its most impressive version, the Baroque, the culmination or excess of which was the Rococo. From the beginning, Islam was a religion that addressed the inner world of man and did not rely on impressing the senses of its followers. Of course, in beauty the money of the Christian priests and monks offered more than the money of their Muslim counterparts. I, as an atheist, am not interested in the positive message of each religion but how much it beautified the world with the works of art it funded. Certainly, however, this funding was the product of plundering and grueling exploitation of Europe's peasants and artisans, as well as the peoples of America, Asia and Africa in the Middle Ages and in more recent times. I mean that however beautiful the works of art that the church funded may be, it would have been better if they hadn't been done.

On the day we visited the Sultan Ahmed Mosque we also visited a neighboring mausoleum with tombs of members of the royal family over the centuries. All these were covered with the green cloth which I had first seen at the tomb of the noblewoman opposite the Echinus. Of one thing, however, I am sure: The Ottoman graves seemed to me less repulsive than the Christian ones with crosses. Perhaps the cross has been identified in my subconscious with death, and the signs with crosses in pharmacies and hospitals, suggest that they too have something to do with death. Nice self-advertisement they do!

Also on the same day we visited in the same place an underground water tank that had been built by the Byzantine emperor Justinian I and was used to irrigate his palace. This reservoir, Yerebatan in Turkish, was known to me from the book "Yerebatan" by my comerade Giannis Bouketsidis, his only book until his death in 2005. Since there is a description of this reservoir in Bouketsidis's book, I thought Bouketsidis he had visited it. Much later after his death I learned that he had never visited it!

The repeated prayers from the loudspeakers of the mosques and the ban of alcohol in the Muslim world

After all the good things I mentioned about Istanbul's Sultanahmet district, it's time to say something bad. In Istanbul, as, I imagine, and in any city where Islam prevails, from the minarets, where there are loudspeakers, some Muslim singing prayer (chanting) is heard five times a day. It lasts at least ten minutes and all this time, with the volume heard from the speakers, it dominates the atmosphere. Especially in the Sultanahmet area, due to the many minarets and the loudspeakers they have, the volume of the chanting and its periodic repetition is very disturbing. If we compare it with the disturbance caused by the ringing of the bells of the Orthodox Christian churches every Sunday and holiday, surely the disturbance from the Muslim prayers is greater because these are daily and are done several times a day. And just from this form of forcing religion on people, in addition to the ugly position that the Muslim religion reserves for women, life in a Muslim society would be suffocating for

me, especially in a theocratic regime like Iran or an absolute monarchy of Muslim fanatics, such as Saudi Arabia. Finally, I would also find it disturbing to ban alcohol for all considered honest citizens who in these countries must be Muslims, and to limit it to only a few special shops. Of course, I know that even in Islamic countries there are many hypocritical Muslims who drink alcohol secretly, but this does not improve the situation. Similar is the hypocrisy of the British who limit the consumption of alcohol to only a few shops, after 11 o'clock at night, and, from that time on, it is not sold in overnight supermarkets. As they also do not allow the sale of alcohol to people under 25 years of age. One cannot say that this way is reduced the alcohol consumption in Great Britain, judging by how much the British drink during their holidays in Greece. They are "stronger glasses" than the Greeks.

The grim reality behind the facade: Alcohol consumption and prostitution

And since we are talking about alcohol in Istanbul, every night I drank alcohol with Mustafa, specifically beers, in a Trotskyite communist hangout that was also located in an alley on Istiklal Avenue, on the first floor of an old building. These communists were ideologically related to Mustafa and that's why he went to their place every time he went to Istanbul. If I remember correctly, apart from selling beers, they also had music, probably rock, and certainly not traditional or folk Turkish songs. There one day, or rather one evening, we were approached by a Turkish young woman, who sat near us and ordered beer. She didn't know a word of English, or any other language, like most Turks, and I didn't know a word of Turkish. Despite all this she started talking to me and saying that I must be Italian and many other things. Through Mustafa I answered her and she continued to talk to me, until at some point she gave me her phone. When I told her that I have a daughter her age and I would like her to have some communication with my daughter, she "kicked" and from what Mustafa told me I understood that I realized she was a sex worker and that she saw me as a potential client. Mustafa explained to her that she "knocked on the wrong door" and she left and went to a nearby table where several people were sitting, some of whom would know her because they were talking to her. When one of the waiters later brought us a bill for the beers, which included hers, we refused to pay hers. Because the hangout was political, no one could tell us that we were going there to secure the company of a woman in return for the consumption of drinks (consumption).

Such an event happened to me for the first time in my life but, as I found out later, I should not have been surprised. In Turkey, the brothels are state-owned and victim of sex trafficking are imprisoned there, as I found out one morning when I decided to cross a street parallel to Istiklal that passed in front of the main entrance of our hotel. I found out years later that the brothels were state-owned, but the fact the

women were imprisoned there, I found out because I saw bars on the windows of the high-rise old buildings where they were. Their presence in these buildings was felt, for as we passed by the street, they would come behind the barred windows and call out to us. I, of course, did not understand anything, but Mustafa did, though he did not want to accept that they were women. He insisted that they were transvestites. In short, right next to the most touristic avenue of Istanbul, you see a street with buildings where women are trafficked. So out in the open is prostitution in Istanbul. In addition to the fact that in the evenings in the side streets of Istiklal, where there are many shops with music blasting and bulky black-clad thugs at their doors, you see women in the typical provocative attire. Once I even saw one of them with a black eye arguing with a man dressed in black who was walking next to her and yelling at her. It must have been her pimp. I have also seen black-clad pimps entering a brothel in Greece, in the area of Larissa Station, but they could also have been followers of the Golden Dawn, because on one side there are the headquarters of Golden Dawn nearby and on the other the followers of the Golden Dawn wear black clothes and they are burly, like those two I had seen entering the brothel. Also, on another night on the same street where I had seen the man in black and the girl with the blackened eye, I had seen another girl in provocative clothes sitting on the sidewalk and "poking her guts out." It seems that she had drunk "her guts" in order to get customers to buy more drinks in some club. Finally, the hotel we stayed in may have been operating as a "pink hotel", because at some point the receptionist told us that he had vacated a room better than ours and we could go to it. When he took us to see it, we could see that it had light, because it had a balcony door that looked out onto an open space, but instead of two beds, it had a double bed covered with a pink shiny fabric. The receptionist would think I was a couple with my boyfriend and that's why we had chosen his hotel! While we had chosen it because it was cheap and on the internet where we found it, we didn't read that it was a 'pink hotel'. Of course we refused to change rooms.

The impressive "enclosed garden" palace, Mustafa Kemal's apartments and the realization of my dream of drinking coffee by the Bosphorus

To leave Istanbul and not see the new Sultan's Palace, i.e. the one where the last Sultan of the Ottoman Empire lived and the first president of the new state, Turkey, which was founded in 1923 after the expulsion of the Greek conquerors who had landed in Smyrna in 1919 with the intention of erasing the Ottoman Empire from the map, it would have been a great omission. It would be like going to London and not seeing Buckingham Palace or Paris and not seeing the Palace of Versailles. Fortunately, I managed to see it with Mustafa who, although he had been to Istanbul before, had never seen it before. You can tour these palaces only with a guide and in

groups with a limited number of people. Every half hour a group with a foreign-speaking guide and a group with a Turkish-speaking guide enter the palace. In the crowd that had gathered for the foreign-speaking guide, mainly Arabs with children and babies who had brought them in their prams (as a result, at the beginning of the stairs of the building from which the tour began, dozens of prams were lined up, one next to the other), there were so many people, that to get a foreign language guide, we would have to wait hours. Fortunately I had Mustafa with me and entered with the Turkophone group, although the person in charge of the creation of the groups, understanding that I am not Turkish, wanted to send me to the foreign speakers. Mustafa managed to convince him that I was with him and I had no problem with Turkish. Inside, the palace was no different from the palaces of the West, either Buckingham or Versailles, having been built in the 19th century mainly by French architects, following Western architectural and decorative standards. From what I learned afterwards, this palace, known as the Dolma-Bakhtse (Enclosed Garden) Palace, cost so much money that only the Turks have recently been able to pay it off.

The most interesting parts of the palace were the harem building, a rather large and luxurious building, not because it had anything special but because you could see the environment in which these hundreds of concubines and prospective queen mothers lived, as well as the rooms of the first president of Turkey, of Mustafa Kemal, also known as Kemal Atatürk (whose biography I had also read when I was young but remembered nothing). Kemal had chosen rooms with a view of the sea, since the whole palace is built next to the sea, like Louis XIV he had chosen for his bedroom the one that looked directly at the main entrance of the courtyard of the Palace of Versailles. Mustafa was impressed by Kemal's bed, because he found it short, he couldn't imagine that Kemal was short, it seems, while I was impressed by Kemal's medicine cabinet, because it wasn't small. He must have suffered a lot before he died of cirrhosis of the liver at the age of 57.

After the tour of the Dolma-Bakhtseh palaces, I realized a dream I had ever since I read (probably in an Aziz Nesin's book), that there are restaurants with tables by the sea, on the Bosphorus, from where, eating and drinking, you can see the ships and the boats to pass. Indeed, outside the palaces, there was such a cafe and restaurant, where we sat down to drink coffee and eat, although we did not sit in the row of tables that were right next to the railings, over the sea, because at that time it was sunny and the sun was burning, because it was summer. We sat in the next row, which was parallel to it. Soon the sun went out and these tables were filled. Nor did the shop serve alcohol, so that we can see the Bosphorus with different eyes, i.e. with the euphoria that creates the alcohol. But dreams, when they come true, never come true exactly as one imagines them. However, this year that I went to Thrace and Turkey was not just any year. It was a year with 13 moons, with the 13th of which, namely the second moon of August, I was photographed with a view of the Bosphorus and the Asiatic side of Istanbul, that evening, as we were returning from our visit to the palace and seaside cafe.

The anniversary of the Turkish victory over the Greeks on August 30, 1922

I was also lucky in another way on this trip, a luck that started from Kavala airport, from where I was picked up by car by the people I considered my teachers in the anti-racist struggle: During the days I was in Istanbul, was also celebrated the anniversary of the victory against the Greeks, in 1922. The victory, the consequence of which was the creation of the Turkish state in place of the Ottoman empire. This gave me the opportunity to take pictures of huge Turkish flags covering much of the facade of tall buildings, even Hagia Sophia, as well as of me in front of the wreathed victors' monument (with Kemal, etc.) in the center of Taksim Square. In fact, I also bought a Turkish flag from an old lady who was selling flags on the street that day, to make a few quid. Thus, for once at least, I felt that I had escaped the terror of Greek nationalism, which treats with unimaginable ideological and physical violence anyone who dares to challenge Greece's official nationalist view of Turkey. To such an extent that, whoever raises Turkish flags in Greece, the nationalists will lynch him. And it is natural that such fanaticism prevails in Greece since the mass media bash Turkey from morning till night. I will never forget that the only letters I ever sent to the newspapers, in the readers' letters column, and were not published, were the letters where I defended the Turkish minority, while the biggest pogrom that took place in Greece since I was born, before the great pogrom against the Albanians of Athens, in 2004, with 500 wounded in hospitals, was the pogrom against the Turkish minority in Komotini, in 1990. Then how could I not enjoy, together with Mustafa, my coffee on the roof of a luxury cafe in Taksim Square overlooking the entire square, when many of the large buildings surrounding the square or visible in the background had huge Turkish flags covering their facades?

With Mustafa on the roof of a cafe in Taksim Square on the day of the anniversary of the victory of Turks over the Greeks in 1922

I finally felt that where I was, not only did the Greek cockiness and tough-guy act fail to work, but also all those who historically constituted the cream of Greek rapacity and profligacy, i.e. the Greek army that tried to erase Turkey from the map, had taken in 1922 such a lesson from the Turks, which they have never forgotten nor will their descendants ever forget. They suffered so much damage that their defeat and its sad consequences for the Greek-speaking people of the Ottoman Empire, took from them the name: "Asia Minor Catastrophe".

The view from the roof of the Taksim Square cafe. On the building in the background the Turkish flag due to the anniversary of the victory of the Turks against the Greeks on 30-8-1922

On the Golden Horn Bridge and the huge "Covered Bazaar" of Istanbul

One last part of Istanbul I wanted to see before we left was the Golden Horn Bay which ends at the Bosphorus and is crossed by a bridge with a lot of tourist traffic. I would say that it is the busiest bridge in Istanbul, by city dwellers and tourists alike. Because of this gulf I had learned that it was closed with a huge chain when Istanbul was besieged from the sea in the Middle Ages, so that enemy ships could not enter it, and I had read in the book of the great Turkish writer Yasar Kemal "Even the birds flew away», that it was so filthy, that it looked like an open cesspool from all the

trash floating on its surface. Fortunately since Kemal wrote the book, it has been cleaned up. And in fact they cleaned it so well that it doesn't even resemble that image that Kemal gives. To get there, we took the tram and passed through the Karakioi district, which is famous for its many brothels. The treatment of women, in general, in Turkey is bad and many Turks are porn clients. In this at least the Greeks resembled the Turks, since the Greeks take care to take from other peoples their bad habits and not their good ones.

With Mustafa at the beginning of the bridge of the Golden Horn Bay

Also, apart from the bridge of the Golden Horn, we also visited the big covered market of the city, which is also known as the Covered Bazaar, because it is housed in a very extensive building that was built hundreds of years ago but reached its current form after many disasters, from earthquakes and from fire, with the consequence that it is not exactly the same as it was hundreds of years ago. It is the biggest bazaar I have ever visited. Because it is world famous, it was packed with so many people, that it was hard to walk. It had some pretty interesting stuff, some of which I would have liked to buy but I thought it would cause me trouble if my suitcase was checked at the border, so I didn't buy it to avoid risking it. But since I had promised my friend Luludis that I would bring him a sweatshirt from Istanbul, as he had asked me to, I got him the sweatshirt from a street vendor near the tram station where you get off for the bazaar. I got it cheaper than I would have bought it in the bazaar. Finally, and even outside the covered area of the bazaar, various

second-hand sellers had scattered their wares in the square, with certainly much cheaper things than those in the bazaar that the shopkeepers sell.

While we stayed in Istanbul, Mustafa made sure I got a taste of Turkish cuisine, where, for religious reasons, pork is absent. And although the dishes I tried in the restaurants were quite tasty, like the dishes of oriental cuisine in general, their skewer and Kokoreç (Turkish-style grilled lamb intestines), which you can take from the street and eat walking, were far inferior to the Greek ones. Their skewer from beef is inside a soft Arabic pita with a little meat and a lot of vegetables, while their Kokoreç is rubbed until it becomes a lot of crumbs, which they mix with a lot of vegetables, to the extent that the final result, which they serve it also wrapped in a pie, not to taste like the greek Kokoreç. Anyway, from what I wrote above, I think it is clear that during these four days that we stayed in Istanbul, in addition to a taste of Turkish cuisine, I also got a quick taste of this cosmopolitan metropolis with a huge history. No doubt there were many more things worth seeing when its historic mausoleum mosques alone number over a thousand. But, at least, I now feel a familiarity with this eternal city that I would not have felt if I had never been there. It would be a shame if I had lived almost all my life in Greece and died without having visited this impressive metropolis with a great history, which I have heard about since I was a child.

In the pavilion of the officials during the annual wrestling matches in Alantepe!

From Istanbul I returned with Mustafa to Komotini, from where I had arranged, at the suggestion of Abdulhalim, to go to another great event of the Turkish minority. As we passed the Ebros, the river that separates the two countries and forms their border, I looked curiously out of the bus window to see where all those thousands of people who try to cross it every year could be crossing it, of whom so many have drowned, so many have been injured or killed by landmines, and so many have been arrested by soldiers, police and border guards with the result that many have been sent back and the rest have been locked up in concentration camps. For years I had heard from Erdal, whom we managed to get out of prison, that the border guards, when they caught many refugees, forced them to return by swimming in the river, consequently, those who did not make it with its rushing current river, to drown. At the time when I normally crossed this river, the Greek state had built a large wall of many kilometers with foreign money, with the result that the flow of refugees crossing the river without documents has been reduced to a minimum and the large mass of refugees is trying to came to Greece by sea. I couldn't digest that so many people are tortured and killed to cross the borders that I cross so easily. I felt privileged on the one hand, but on the other hand it seemed difficult for me to grasp the fact that in many countries life is so unbearable that people gamble their lives in order to escape from them and cross the borders, which separate them from Greece or Europe in general. Finally, I felt that the country I was returning to, Greece,

was not my country but belonged to those who decided who would enter and who would leave, i.e. the state and its lackeys. If it were mine, would I not let people come freely to save theirselves from suffering and death in their own country?

The event I went to with Abdulhalim was a wrestling festival of a form of wrestling that I knew of as "Greco-Roman", without being able to say for sure if the wrestling I watched was Greco-Roman, as I had never been to a wrestling match before. It was held on a large open space , on some hill, which was known as Alantepe, i.e. flat top, in the area of the Municipality of Arrianon, and it had a long history. It was made since the time of the Ottoman Empire and for some years it had been banned, because the Greeks had lost control over it. When I went, only Turks had come to the festival, some of whom, I suppose, would be Pomaks. In addition to wrestling matches, the festival also included dances and songs, all in Turkish. And the speeches that were given were in Turkish, but someone thought that something should also be said in Greek and it was said. The place where the wrestling would take place was a field fenced in with wire, around which people had gathered to listen to the music, to see the traditional Turkish dances and then to see the wrestling matches. For me, Abdulhalim succeeded again and secured a place among the officials, who sat in a covered area and were offered food. So I also ate for free and they also gave me two souvenir hats: One for these games and another from some event that had taken place in Bursa (Prusa), Turkey. And although from the position I was in I could see quite well and I also took video, first the platform with the organists and a singer with a cap and black glasses who went around the stadium singing, and then the wrestlers, before the end of the matches my good friend put me inside the fenced area and I videoed the wrestlers next to the platform. These were not only Turks but also from other Balkan countries. The Greeks were conspicuously absent, I would say, and I saw only one Greek wrestler, who, however, did not live in Greece. The winner was a bulky Turk with the surname Chaous. Chaous, I had read, were called the military men who had police duties in the Ottoman Empire. His name, in other words, matched his sport.

An image from the wrestling matches in Alantepe

Mustafa Tsolak is targeted by the far-right newspaper "Stohos" during our trip to Istanbul

I returned to Athens via Alexandroupolis, from where I took the plane. When I was returning to Athens, I had no idea that this would be my last trip abroad. Yet! I sunk so much financially, that since then I have not been able to travel again, not only abroad but also domestically, except for Lefkada, where I travel compulsorily, for business, except for a trip I made much later, to present a book I had translate, and my expenses were borne by comrades. Anyway, in my lifetime, I've managed to see quite a few interesting places, especially abroad, especially abroad, which neither my parents nor my in-laws managed to do, who never left Greece, if we exclude Albania, where my father fought and was seriously wounded, and Egypt, where my father-in-law was exiled after the "December ribellion" of 1944. But in both cases, both were forced abroad, one as a soldier and the other as a prisoner!

When I returned to Greece I learned that, while I was in Istanbul with Mustafa, the far-right newspaper "Stohos" targeted him as an enemy of the nation and the country, dedicating a two-page spread to launch a political smear campaign against him and even publishing a color photo of him . To see this disgrace I bought the

newspaper "Stohos" for the first time in my life (and I hope for the last). Although I was flattered by the idea that I visited the Greek fascists' eternal goal of conquest, Istanbul, together with one of their greatest enemies, I would not at all want to be in Mustafa's place. These newspapers by targeting the enemies of fascism in this way are tacitly inciting every bum who works for the fascists to use violence against the anti-fascist they are targeting. To such newspapers and to such channels I attribute the acts of violence, of which the members of the Anti-Nationalist Movement Abdulhalim Dede and Pavlos Voskopoulos (Filipov) have fallen victims, of course, without claiming that they were beaten by the fascists only because they were members of the Anti-Nationalist Movement.

RETURN TO GREECE AND CONTINUATION OF THE ADVENTURES

Another attempt to push my new friend to continue her studies – An old friend and comrade of ours reappears out of nowhere

Now, as for my friend Nancy, since she had repeatedly expressed a desire to leave the squat, I helped her rent a studio apartment near the Zografou Polytechnic University Campus, so that she would be close to her faculty's building, where she was recently admitted under the 10% quota system. Unfortunately for her, the 'summer vacation'—that is, the carefree and irresponsible lifestyle that university students lead during the summer months—continued into the fall. As a result, she neither started teaching children nor began attending her classes systematically. Instead, enticed by a female friend who had recently bought a car, she decided to go with her friend abroad, to a Balkan country, for a few days' vacation. It was all in vain; I exhausted myself trying to change her mind, knowing how dangerous it is for two women to travel alone in the Balkans. One fine day she got up and left with her friend.

At that time, I had rekindled my friendship with a former female colleague of ours from the anti-racist struggles, Nana, whom I had lost for many years. I had found her again by chance, as she had passed by a cafe occupied by anti-authoritarians in Exarchion Square, where I happened to be with some friends. She used to make some dolls and, since Sophia didn't have a job but needed money, she learned from Nana to make dolls too. After all, when I had met Sophia 36 years earlier, Sophia was working in a workshop that made dolls and had some idea from this job. With this friend, I went to the theater, something I had last done many years ago. Nana had an actor friend who played in this theater and she couldn't help but go and see him. After all, she too had a role in an opera that was being performed at the Athens Opera House at the time and this made her feel some solidarity towards her friends of the same profession. For me, her idea was very good, because the work was excellent, it was "Uncle Vanya" by Chekhov. The actors performed very well and because the theater was small we were close to the stage without having to pay a big ticket. I can say that I was the only boor in the audience during the show, because I had forgotten to put my phone on silent. And it’s certainly incredibly annoying when a phone rings while the actors are delivering their lines. And even more annoying is when the viewer, instead of turning it off, speaks to it, however softly. Because I didn't limit myself to having the phone on during the project, but I also talked. Could I have done otherwise, when I saw that the call was from my friend who was abroad in such a vulnerable position, according to my own estimation? And indeed, she was out of money and needed to send her something. She didn't pay for a hotel, but was staying at the home of a friend of her girlfriend, so she had left Greece with very little money. Anyway, the actors "didn't hold a

grudge against me" and after the show I sat with Nana with them. We sat next to Nana's friend, to whom she introduced me, without telling him how we had met. It is understood that she invited him to see her at the Opera House, in the opera "Manon Lescaut", where she was performing.

For the first and last time I see an opera at the Athens Opera House under incredible psychological pressure

A few days passed between the day Nana and I went to the theater and the day I went with my friend and classmate, Kostas Darmos, to see Nana herself play a wordless role in the opera "Manon Lescaut". I had already promised her that after the show I would bring her flowers! I had never in my life been to this lyric theater before, although I had seen it countless times on my way up the Academias Street. In fact, right next to it, a lawyer, a distant relative of ours, had his office. In the past he had helped us a lot when my father died, to deal with the tax office, which was asking for exorbitant amounts. Of course, this did not protect us from selling an 82 square meter apartment in Americis Square and half of the building that was built where it used to be the house where I was born, in Kallithea, in order to pay the inheritance tax. So, due to tax, we were left without our own house in Athens. To return to the theater: I had never seen an opera before. It was a great opportunity to kill not just two, but three birds with one stone: I would finally see an opera, I would finally visit the Greek National Opera, and I would fulfill my duty to Nana.

And yet, unfortunately, things did not turn out that way. Already in the afternoon, before I went to the theater, I had been called by a friend of Nancy's, who would not say where he found my phone or his name, to tell me that Nancy had disappeared and that I should look for her via the embassy of the country she had gone to. I was genuinely alarmed by this unpleasant development, which made me worry that my fears had been realized and that this girl had suffered something bad. I was afraid that she had been abducted by traffickers, as is often done in the former communist countries of Eastern Europe with vulnerable girls. After all, hadn't we screened a relevant documentary in Lefkada as an Autonomous Initiative of Lefkada? To make it even more difficult for me to see the opera, as if I wasn't worried enough, my friend Vasia called me by chance and when I told her the developments, she told me that she knew the friend with whom the "lost girl" had traveled, and she would find her phone for me to call her. With all this in mind I found myself in the "gallery" of the Greek National Opera , and specifically in the very last seat in the back left corner. Kostas was sitting right in front of me. What struck me the most about the Opera House, was a large long narrow screen hanging from the ceiling, in front of the stage, and on it one could read the translation of the dialogues and monologues of the opera, which were in the language in which the opera was

written, and in this language the actors recited them. And although I followed the case, my mind, naturally, was elsewhere, and I was much worried. Kostas was dozing off most of the time, barely able to keep his eyes open as he was exhausted that particular day, since a dog he had rescued from the street to save its life and had given it to a dentist friend of him to keep it in her yard, had bitten a client of the dentist, which client was threatening to sue the dentist! Kostas, after the high school where he taught, had spent the entire day rushing around for the dog and his dentist. He could not, therefore, watch the opera, since he was falling asleep, and finally saw it another time, together with his wife. During the break, I learned from Vasia the phone number of Nancy's friend and called her. After that phone call, instead of decreasing my anxiety increased, because her friend told me that they had a fight and she had left her abroad alone and she had returned to Greece! 'Well, that's just great!' I said to myself when I found this out too. A girl all alone, without even enough money to return, in a Balkan country. She was the perfect target for would-be kidnappers.

Under such circumstances, I watched the rest of the opera—meaning that until it finally ended, I was sitting on pins and needles. And when it was over and we walked out of the Opera, I was looking for flowers and I couldn't find anywhere. I didn't even want to go all the way to the Syntagma, and have Nana come out of the theater and not find me. I would definitely find flowers in Syntagma Square. 'Flowers are the last thing we need right now,' I thought to myself while waiting for Nana, as I called the lawyer I had sent to help Nancy when she was detained at Petrou Ralli, hoping he might be able to trace her through the police of the country where she had gone missing. And I continued to wait for Nana in vain, because she had already left while I was away looking for flowers and now she was in a coffee-house adjacent to the theater, with some of her aunts who had gone to see her. When she finally came out of the cafe, she found me without any flowers and deeply worried because, as I told her, something bad had happened to someone I knew. After all that had happened since last May, because of my new friendship, I had no desire to give details about my personal life to all my friends. Under these circumstances, I saw an opera for the first and, I fear, last time in my life—even though I spent a year and a half in Milan, home to one of the most famous opera houses in the world, the 'Teatro alla Scala' (known simply as La Scala), where I could have seen an opera back then if only I'd had the money.

The "lost" friend is found again at her home!

The next day I had made an appointment with the friend of the "lost" at the coffee shop across the street from Navarinou park and from her I learned some details, such as that they had gotten involved with various groups, had been accommodated in various houses and that Nancy was having such a great time, she didn't want to go back to Greece. So at some point when they finally were returning to Greece, after some fight in the car, when they stopped at a gas station on the way, Nancy got out and started calling her new Bulgarian friends, hoping they would host her again. She paid no attention to her friend's repeated suggestions that they go on, until her friend got into the car and continued alone to Greece. From then on, the traces of the girl were lost and since then six days had passed! Some phone calls we made to her new friends in the country she was lost, did not enlighten us and so the suspense continued.

It continued until Sophia, who was also worried about what she was learning from me, was willing to call the girl's mother with whom she was acquainted when she was helping the girl out on Petrou Ralli. When Sophia called to ask, her mother told her that Nancy was at her house, that is, her mother's house, and that she had brought her four days ago from the country she had been to , where she had found her in a hospital. Then I also spoke to the girl who didn't sound very well either. At least that adventure was over. I, however, was never able to find out what kind of accident she had, no matter how hard I pressed. It must have been something serious, however, because after her return the girl rented out her house and went and stayed with her mother, even though she didn't want to. As things turned out, I don't know if I should be happy or sad that I helped the girl out of the squat, because, in the end, she ended up back at her mother's house. And so I was taught another lesson: good intentions and honest struggles are not enough when it comes to helping others, and through them, yourself, as Bakunin thinks you do, when you struggle for others. If they themselves are not able to bear the burden of the struggle and demonstrate the necessary virtue and courage that freedom requires according to Calbus, you are just pouring water into the "the vessel of the Danaids".

The sequel and eventual dramatic end to our old friend's brief presence in my life: Sofia and I ended up completely falling out!

I saw Nana again at her house, where after some time she has invited me and Sophia for her birthday. There we also found her friend the actor, from whom we learned that, many years ago, when he was young, he had supported us, going to the demonstrations and events held for us, as long as we were inside. There we also found Stefanos, a comrade who had been wounded by a policeman's bullet, during one of those protests, which had been combined with the anniversary demonstration for the 1973

Polytechnic University's uprising massacre. Thirty-one years had gone by since we got out, and yet we still found people who had stood up for us; they openly said they had no regrets, because they saw we were worth it.The company we had made that night was so good that we stayed at Nana's house until morning, when the actor and us took the first bus home together. Since then, I neither saw the actor nor went to Nana's house again. And since the New Year I have never seen Nana again, as we will see below. On the other hand, I chanced upon a musician friend of hers who came to perform at a place of ours; she was the one who had played and sung various songs on the piano at the birthday party.

The long-standing friendship with Nana ended on New Year's Eve 2012. On New Year's Eve, Nana, with her friend, Sophia and my children, went outside Korydallos prisons, where every year, when the time changes, protesters gather for to sympathize with the prisoners. They went in Nana's car and I, because I couldn't fit, stayed at home with a white dog we have, Christiana's dog, who, although she is white and I am old, is not called Zacharias, like the sarcastic white dog in the excellent series of sketches by Arkas "Man's worst friend". In this comic strip, the dog constantly mocks his old master. Our dog doesn't speak, of course. She only barks, and even that is very rare. If she could talk, she would be mocking me too, because Nancy had also been to Korydallos, and Nana, learning from Sophia of her friendship with me, went and threatened her very vulgarly, because Nancy had a friendship with me. When I found out about what happened from Nancy a few days later and I had a mountain to climb just to convince her not to cut off our friendship, because Nana wanted it, I felt that Nana had gone too far by meddling in my private affairs and having the nerve to want to change my life. Since then I have not spoken to her again nor have I responded to her relevant e-mail, where she denied the incident as I had heard it from the girl.

However, there was a sequel to this incident. Nana caused me and Sofia to have such a fierce row—unlike any we had ever had before—because Sofia was backing her up. After this argument, we ended up completely falling out. This fallout not only dragged on for months, but it also led to further consequences, as we will see later on.

An act of hospitality that cost Sofia an emergency trip and me a summons to the police station!

In March of that year, I had to go to Lefkada for house maintenance. Nancy expressed interest in coming along, since she had visited Lefkada in the past and had liked it very much. I told her that, since things were complicated with Sofia, it wouldn't be possible for her to stay in my house which after all belonged to Sophia. So, I would sound out a friend of mine to see if he could host her instead. This would happen after I first went to Lefkada. And indeed, in Lefkada, my friend accepted to host her at his parents' house, as it happened in the end. During my stay in Lefkada, she came to my house every day with my friend, who had a means of transport. At the same time, I also met his cousin, who was about the same age as him. At that

time, I wasn't totally wiped out financially yet, and we spent an evening, the four of us, at a traditional tapas-style tavern on the main road of the town, known as Agora. Also, sometimes, I visited with my friend and the girl a vineyard of his, which he cultivates and makes his family's wine. Actually, that must have been when my friend was planting new vines, and he let me plant one too. Unfortunately, before he planted them, they had been around for a long time with the result that neither they nor the one I planted which was one of them took hold. In short, we had a good time that March in Lefkada. But in the end, things took a bad turn. In particular, Nancy had a phone call with her mother, who kept pressuring her to go back. Sometimes Nancy would leave her cell phone uncharged and her mother couldn't get hold of her. Then she would take me and complain. Even though I kept begging Nancy, she continued to lose touch with her mom, until her mother completely lost her mind and rang Sophia to threaten her with the cops and everything. Sophia, who didn't know anything, freaked out. She took the bus and came to Lefkada for a single day, just to talk my friend into sending the girl back to her house in Athens. I did not learn anything about this trip when it took place, because no one told me anything. But I found out later. Fortunately, my friend respected our friendship and above all the girl and didn't kick her out.

As for the end of March, I had arranged long in advance with my friend Manolo to speak at the launch of the re-issue of his book, 'The Social Struggles of Anti-Authoritarian Groups During the Eight Years of PASOK,' which was to take place at the squatted café in Exarcheia Square; therefore, shortly before the end of March, I left Lefkada, leaving the girl behind with my friend. And once in Athens, I made it to my appointment on time, although very few people showed up at the presentation, where three of us spoke: myself, Manolo, and Giorgos Karantonis, a lawyer, writer, and friend of Manolo. At the same time, from Athens I kept asking the girl to communicate with her mother, without knowing what had recently intervened between the latter and Sophia, nor about the lightning trip. Until one fine day, when I was at my summer house, her mother took me and threatened me, and after a while, a cop from the Exarcheia Police Station called me and said they wanted to talk to me, because the girl's mother had gone to the Prosecutor, who had referred her to them. When I went there a couple of days later, I did not find the person who had called me, but the officer on duty I found was very reasonable. When I told him that it was no minor girl but a full grown woman, a student at the Polytechnic University (N.T.U.A.), who was simply on vacation and he could call her and talk to her, if he wanted, the case was closed there. He didn't even call her. Why would he, anyway? In any case, that was the last time, so far, that the 'forces of law and order' ever bothered with me. And all for what? For a woman—bringing the famous saying 'cherchez la femme' to life in my own history, as the cause of an ordeal that her mother dragged me into by making a huge scene and involving everyone, even the police!

From relationship problems to health problems: A kidney colic and my first operation under general anesthesia

Although what happened towards the end of March was not a pleasant thing, what happened to me in early May was much worse. You can deal with being treated unfairly when you are in the right. What you can't deal with is continuous, intense pain, like a kidney colic, which doesn't respond to standard, non-prescription painkillers. Because with a doctor's prescription you can, I suppose, get strong painkillers, like morphine and its substitutes, regardless of whether the doctors don't prescribe them and leave you in pain, like they left my mother. So, I got kidney colic. In fact, that May I was at my cottage painting the kitchen myself, having moved or covered the furniture and electrical appliances. At that stage, the water heater also broke down, with the result that I had no way to wash to get rid of the dust I had collected from the scrubs. Right in the middle of all this chaos, I was hit by the kidney colic, and within two days, it became completely unbearable. It was Easter Day; while everyone else had slaughtered and was roasting lambs, I was being slaughtered by an excruciating pain that nothing could soothe and in the end made me take the bus and go back to Athens, where together with my daughter I ended up in the emergency room of a private hospital. As I was on the bus, I didn't know if I would end up in an operation and whether I would live or die after it, and I had absolutely no desire to go through that kind of ordeal. But the pain was just too much to handle, so I decided to head to the hospital and come what may. Anyway, at the hospital after tests they told me that I had a stone in the ureter which was blocking the passage of urine and that was why the kidney was hurting. Luckily I was saved from something serious, but that didn't mean I was done. The exams were to be seen by an urologist and the one with whom they had contacted about my case would come to Athens three days later. For that period, they gave me new painkillers, which didn't work on me either.

The next day, I went with Sophia to the state hospital that was also on duty for urological problems, Sismanoglio. This is where my mother died and I had last visited it a few years ago, to see my brother's childhood friend, Mimi, who had undergone an operation there. In the outpatient clinic we found too many people, three doctors in an office deciding which doctor they would send you to, and a security guard calling out the names of those for whom the doctors had decided which doctor they would go to, in the order in which the decisions had been made. Because the doctors' decisions were made faster than the competent doctor examined those who were sent to him, the security guard called out the names little by little and the waiting time was long. We waited for hours and we also witnessed a lot of trouble. Specifically, an old man in a wheelchair with an IV in his arm was pressing the security guard to let him go first, but the guard wouldn't budge. In the end the old man cursed him and the security guard hit him. And it wasn't just that guy with the security guard. A lot of people had a problem with him and that's why there were always fights, only they didn't end in blows. In such

conditions we waited for several hours, with pain in my kidney but not too intense, until the urologist who was going to receive us, came out in front of the security guard and told everyone who was waiting for a urologist to pass, because he had finished with the previous ones. I was among them, so I went and waited again, together with Sophia, outside his door. When I went in and told him the story, he sent me for an x-ray, even though I had one the day before. When I told this to the radiologist he sent me back to the doctor to ask and he said to go ahead. So I was again exposed to the dangerous radiation of x-rays and in vain, because the x-ray showed nothing. An ultrasound that would show, they didn't give me and the doctor told me to go home and wait for the stone to fall on its own, when I told him it was 6 millimeters. And yet the stone was 7 millimeters and when the private doctor I went to the other day saw it, he told me to get it out immediately, because it could cause damage to the kidney. I arranged with him the day of the operation and, on that particular day, I was at a private hospital in Pagrati, where, after an hour or two of delay in coming, he removed it in the operating room with a cystoscopic tube and general anesthesia. I didn't realize when I fell asleep, but I realized when I woke up that a catheter had been inserted into me. Until they took him out, some hours later, I suffered. Luckily I left the hospital that afternoon. My daughter had also come and seen me at the hospital and I appreciated that, because I felt that she was interested in me. This has been the only surgery I have done under general anesthesia in my life till then. And when I got back to the cottage, I called an electrician, he fixed the heater and I finished painting. Although I still owe the money I paid for the operation, because I pay interest every month along with a small amount for repayment, I can say that I got off easy, once again.

Nationalism triumphs, the fascists are elected by hundreds of thousands of Greeks while we anti-nationalists are just scraping by, with the result that we haven't published a magazine since

In the summer, as in previous summers, we participated as an Anti-Nationalist Movement in the Anti-Racist Festival that takes place every year, except in 2011 when it was not held under the pretense of obstructing the elections. And yet it had to be done then, because two months earlier the Golden Dawn had started its great pogrom. Were they afraid of suffering what had happened to the anti-racist festival of Cyprus in those years, when the fascists had dismantled it? Anyway, because there was no festival in 2011, we did not publish a new magazine of our collective. But this year we made it. We took out the seventh and last one. During this festival that took place one year after the two elections in 2012, when for the first time Golden Dawn elected MPs by receiving over 440,000 votes in the first and over 425,000 votes in the second, the public's interest in our magazine and our material, in general, was lower than ever. The public, it seems, had been captivated by nationalism—with Golden Dawn leading the charge and the rest trailing far behind, sweating to keep up and trying to copy them—and people simply didn't want to hear about anti-nationalism anymore. That nationalism resulted in unpunished robbery, injury and murder of immigrants meant nothing to the anti-racists at the festival, because as leftists they attributed these crimes to citizens outraged by the economic crisis, not to nationalists. The left has always flirted with nationalism, even when it showed its most repulsive face, such as National Socialism. Under such circumstances, in order not to have the magazines we had produced remain in our warehouse, we gave them away for free and, since then, we have not produced a magazine again. We turned out to be powerless against an electorate so deeply nationalistic as Greece's, which reached the point of electing 18 National Socialists to the Greek Parliament, whereas no other Nazi party holds seats in any other European legislature.

The nationalists push the parties beyond their limits of tolerance, stabbing an anti-fascist rapper to death, only for their leaders to be jailed for a brief period

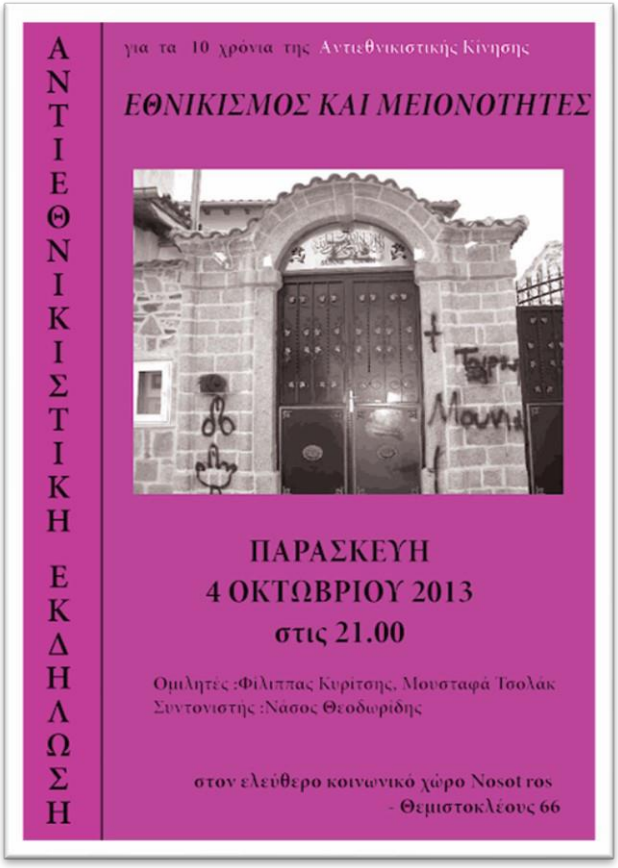
As anti-nationalists, we also participated in the Syriza Youth Festival that took place at the end of September. From all of this, the only thing I look back on fondly is that on the penultimate day, once it was over, we were returning from Faliro by tram—myself, Nasos, and two migrant women, Nancy and Loretta, the president of the United African Women. We spent the entire journey chatting with Loretta. She told us it was the best day of her life, because the police had just busted the Golden Dawn leadership after one of their operatives murdered Pavlos Fyssas. I was happy, because the proverb 'tell me who your friends are, and I'll tell you who vou are' kept coming to my mind. That I and

Nassos were returning from the festival with immigrant women on public transport, I think it said a lot about who we were. Unfortunately, those arrested were imprisoned for a limited period of not more than a year, and then the judges let them out on the pretext that all their offenses were one and for one offense the law forbids one to remain under trial for more than a year. Of course, they don't apply this to anti-authoritarians who get involved in armed struggle, because for them they say that the offenses are many and that is why, once their time or the six-month extension expires (since extensions are granted in their case), a new term of remand begins for another charge. This farce prompted a pre-trial anti-authoritarian named Sakkas to launch a major hunger strike, forcing them to let him out. Sadly, he was re-arrested years later and is back behind bars. Meanwhile, Pavlos Fyssas's killer and the rest of the Golden Dawn crew are still free on remand—with many serving as MPs, pocketing hefty salaries of thousands of euros each month. Even state TV broadcasts them, under the current left-far-right coalition government.

The event for the ten years of the Anti-Nationalist Movement

Nasos Theodoridis and I met again about a week later, at the event we organized as the Anti-Nationalist Movement to mark the 10th anniversary of our group's founding. The idea was mine, and as Chrysovergis used to say about 20 years earlier at the Association of Conscientious Objectors, anyone who brings ideas to the Association should know that they will have to carry them out on their own. This meant I had to arrange everything on my own: the hall, the poster, putting them up, and finding speakers. Luckily, my close friend and collaborator Mustafas agreed to travel down from Komotini to be a speaker at our event. It worked out well because he was already participating in the anti-racist festival organized by Deport Racism Movement around that time. I asked for a hall from Nosotros, as I had done for the previous Antinationalist events, and they gave it to me. Back then, the Nosotros cafe still operated on the roof and that's why we would gather there. My daughter offered to make the poster, and I managed to print it cheaply at a copy shop within the wider activist movement. As for putting them up, Manolo and I handled the postering, with a little help from my daughter. Manolo is older than me and about ten years ago he was run over by a truck at work, as a result of which one of his legs became a "salad" and he was dragged for five years or so, in hospitals with operations etc. He wasn't even part of our anti-nationalist group, but he was the only one who volunteered to help. Nancy offered too, but I told her no. I knew she would see it as a drag, and I hate it when people treat the fight to improve our lives and the world we live in like it’s just a chore. After all, while I was putting up posters with Manolos in Exarchia, she passed by with a friend of hers and didn't even care to read the poster, while she only dropped by the event for a moment

before it started and then left. As for my daughter, the first time she spent some time with us while Manolo and I were postering, and then she left; the second time, she turned up at the Propylaea with her dog, wearing a hat and sunglasses, but by then we were running out of posters, so we told her she could go. Even the weather messed with us, because on the day of the event, October 4th, it got really cold and windy and that's why we couldn't gather on the roof. On the other hand, the main hall that we had taken the previous times was "under construction", because they had sanded the wooden floor and varnished it, with the result that we were forced to gather in a very small room, where the coffee shop would be operating that day. However, I have no complaints from these friends, because they prepared the space for us with microphones and a projector and also placed the chairs.



The poster of the event for the 10 years of the Anti-Nationalist Movement

Nasos attended the event too, as I mentioned before, and spoke, delivering the introduction for my speech and Mustafa's. Our topic was the national minorities of Greece. Neither Sophia nor Nasos's wife nor Mustafa's wife, who at that time was

studying in Athens, came to our event. And the turnout was also small, but because the room was tiny and held few chairs, we even had people standing. One of those standing was a friend of mine George from Nea Ionia, an old anarchist. He was the most aggressive and the least debatable in the discussion that followed, consequently, so as not to curse him, I asked Naso to answer him. I ultimately couldn't get along with this man, whom I had met at the presentation of Manolo's book. A year or two later, during a discussion at Sofia's café—which I will talk about below—because I was defending Turkey regarding Greece's expansionist campaign of 1919–1922, he told me he would never speak to me again. And he didn't, until a funeral in 2017, which I will also mention later on.To return to the event, since we did not organize it just for the few people that night, I had called Vangelis and he videotaped it. We uploaded the video to the internet and to date it has been seen by hundreds who will one day become thousands. This was also the last event that I organized.

Sophia sets up a Social Cooperative Enterprise, my daughter gets her engineering degree, and my friend, a homeless anarchist poet, dies on the street

The following year our financial situation worsened so much that Sophia decided to make an effort to build a social cooperative business, maybe in this way she and my children would survive financially. I started borrowing and paying installments with whatever money I could find. Previously, we moved to another apartment because my daughter finished her studies and received her degree as a 'Spatial Planning, Urban Development, and Regional Development Engineer' from the Polytechnic School of the University of Thessaly; since then, she takes any job she can find—from menial work to freelance gigs—just to survive, because she has connections neither with the state nor with organized crime to get appointed to some Urban Planning office. In other words, she moved back in with us, and that's why we needed a bigger house.

I was mainly concerned with the maintenance of the house in Lefkada and the cottage, because many years had already passed since they were built and they began to show serious damage, which required a lot of work to repair. I didn't have money for craftsmen and I was forced to become a craftsman myself, just like that. So, at one point, I was in Lefkada; I had just finished insulating the roof and had a pipe leak, which is why I had called and was waiting for a plumber, when instead of the plumber, the police called me to say that they had found a dead man on a bench in the pedestrian zone between the Propylaea and the Academy, who had only two phone numbers on him: mine and someone named Filippakis.They told me his name was Louloudakis and I corrected them, telling them his name was Louloudis. I was told that he had been assigned to a funeral home and that they were looking for a relative of his. I told them that he used to live in Anakasa and is known to the

police station there. Also that he had a sister.

Needless to say, the news of my homeless anarchist poet friend's death shocked me a little. He often told me that he was going to die and I, to cheer him up, told him that he told me the same thing a while ago and yet he was alive. He would often tell me he was going to die, and to lift his spirits, I would tell him that he had said the exact same thing a while back, yet he was still alive. On the other hand, I kept trying to convince him to get a low-income medical card so he could have free healthcare, but he didn't have an ID and was afraid to go to the Anakasa police station, fearing they would arrest him for something he couldn't even remember doing. At least, before he died, I managed to publish a collection of his poems ('The Black Box of the Prison') in 40 copies, and to see him signing a copy with a dedication for Giorgos, the nationalist who had harassed us at the last event at Nosotros. The last time I saw him was months before his death in the park of Navarino, where I waited for him for two hours with the friend from Lefkada, who had hosted Nancy. At the time, he excused his delay by claiming he had developed some sort of growth on his leg and was trying to find a doctor. He called me after a month but I was in Lefkada. I was also there when his funeral was held by his sister who was finally found. The only anarchist who went to his funeral in Schisto was Sophia. Hardly anyone attended his funeral, except for his sister and two or three of her friends. What I have left of him is his archive, as he considered me his most trustworthy friend to keep it for him.

The first female anarchist prisoner after the restoration of democracy, and the Syrian refugee who appears as a 'deus ex machina' and ensures the sustainability of the Social Cooperative Enterprise

After a ton of legwork and with borrowed cash, Sofia finally got the social cooperative enterprise up and running. It was a co-op cafe selling juices, fruit salads, and coffee. The place struggled right from the start, dealing with major issues like a rigged electricity meter that didn't track power usage, and it never really took off. She wouldn't turn it into a tapas-style tavern, no matter how much I pushed her. She was completely against working night shifts, so she shut the place down by nine-thirty in the evening max. There I began to see the first anarchist who went to prison after the restoration of democracy of 1974: Stavroula Lagadinou. Before the restoration of democracy, Katia Kampiotiou, who was sentenced together with Vassilis Karaplis, was imprisoned as an anarchist during the 1967-1974 dictatorship. Angela Foteinou, who in 1972 published the book "The Anarchists" by Roderick Kedward, was also imprisoned during the dictatorship for political reasons for a few weeks. Stavroula was jailed in 1977 following the anarchist riots in Athens that broke out after the deaths of German urban guerrillas Baader, Esslin, and Raspe in prison—an incident the authorities staged as a suicide. She had been sentenced to years, but she didn't serve more than about three months. When we used to see her at Sofia’s shop and have some wine, she had a child in middle school and absolutely no money. They had even cut off her water supply. Nevertheless Despite all

this, she had a certain liveliness in her and was a wonderful speaker. I had suggested that she participate in the documentary I had started, but she didn't want her face to be shown because she looked much worn out. Yet, she had so much she could have told us. She had done a mountain of legwork to organize the first concert ever held at the Sporting indoor arena in Agios Eleftherios, Acharnon, back in 1979; in fact, she had even managed to secure 20,000 drachmas for the concert from the legendary rebetiko musician Vassilis Tsitsanis, as I mentioned above.

In addition to Stavroula, I also saw other old comrades such as Giannis who published "Antithesis" in 1986, Apostolidis with whom we had made the second committee for foreign workers and minorities, Manolo from the same committee, George from Nea Ionia that I mentioned above, etc. But the shop could not be kept with them alone and Sophia had no other circle than the anarchists. Since they snobbed the shop, even though they walked past it many times, there was no way it could survive. It went from bad to worse, until one day he appeared, just like the manna from heaven for the Israelites who left Egypt in search of the 'Promised Land' Castro. Castro was a well-known activist who had been imprisoned in 2003, because he had been caught in the demonstration against the summit meeting of the eight most economically powerful countries in the world, which had then taken place in Thessaloniki. While in prison, he and other detainees went on a major hunger strike, and because of the massive solidarity movement that developed, the state was forced to release them after a few months. In recent years he has been fighting for Syrian refugees, being a Syrian refugee himself. He appreciated the importance of the work Sophia had done and managed to set up a social cooperative business, something extremely difficult, and suggested that they work together, renting and fixing up the shop next door which its previous tenant had recently abandoned because he had gone bankrupt, even though he had spent around 30,000 euros on it. Sophia accepted and after a lot of construction work and a lot of fussing with some of the new members of the cooperative, brought by Castro, the shop opened and, fortunately, it went and is still going well, because it became a tapas-style tavern, just like I had previously suggested for Sofia's first shop.

COMRADES AND FRIENDS ARE DYING – THE TRANSLATIONS AND THE FINAL RECOGNITION

A succession of friends and comrades are dying, one after the other, signaling that I am approaching the end of my own life

The following year was the year that Michalis Protopsaltis—an old comrade and the distributor of my books, known as 'Kokoras' (the Rooster)—also passed away. He had a stroke, went to the hospital and died the next day. On the day of the stroke, I was carrying an encyclopedia that I had brought for sale from Lefkada, from a transport agency in Kifissos, to my home. Because I had placed three boxes of books in front of the door of the apartment building, until I carried the fourth one, a thug named Redoumis, who showed up as the building's superintendent, started shouting at me, and got right in my face, looking for trouble. I thought about driving a knee into his stomach, but I had no desire to start a new chapter in my life over a nobody. Long story short, his wife came and took him away. As the elevator door was closing behind him, he barked at me, 'I'm going to fuck your ass.' At Sofia's suggestion, we went to complain at their apartment, but he remained completely unfazed and defiant. I thought about filing a lawsuit against him, but I didn't have 150 euros to waste on his account, because nowadays filing a complaint costs 150 euros and the case is only heard years later. I was extremely upset that day, knowing that so many scumbags like him walk around unpunished, and I still haven't digested it; however, when I learned what happened to Kokoras, I realized that compared to him, nothing had happened to me.

Kokoras was buried in the cemetery of Aghii Anargyri, where his parents and our friend Giannis Bouketsidis had been buried ten years earlier. I remember the scene at the Exarcheia café, where anarchists used to gather starting in 1975, when Bouketsidis would tell me he'd publish my translation 'Memoirs of Female Terrorists' and Kokoras would publish the translation of 'The Struggle to Be Human.' They never published anything for me, they passed away, and I lived long enough to see these translations finally being published—the first by the 'Solidarity Fund for Imprisoned and Persecuted Fighters' and the other by 'Opportuna' publications. From these translations, not only did I get no money, but I even put out of my own pocket to type one. I did them for the movement and not for livelihood reasons. And, fortunately, they weren't the last either. Having nothing better to do in recent years, I thought of translating again some books that I considered very important. Speaking about the books I have already translated one was from Italian, another from French and the third from English.

During the period following Kokoras's death, since the years have now gone by and 'my own' world has begun to pass away, other friends and comrades died

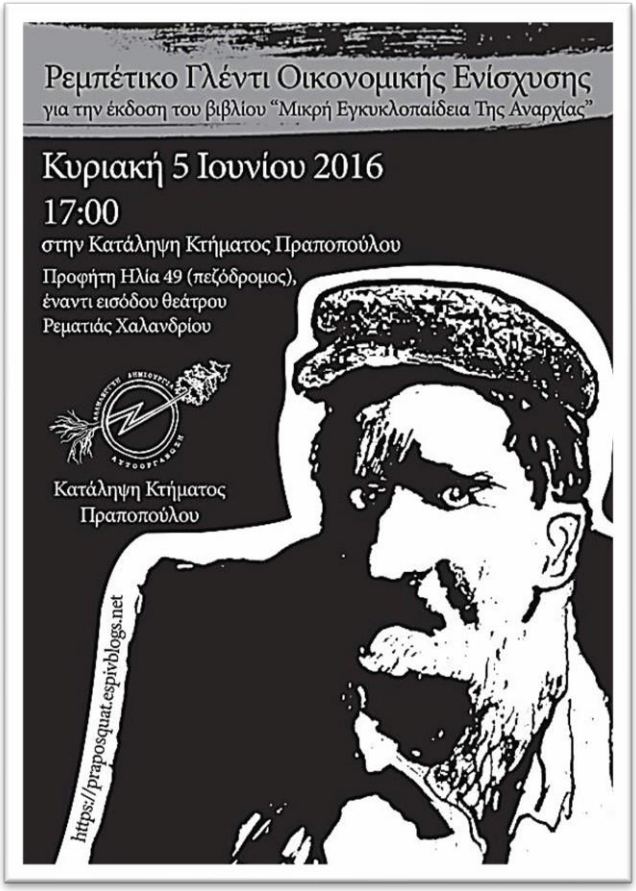
too—such as my friend Apostolis; Vassilis Karaplis, with whom we had collaborated on the little newspaper 'The Anarchist', as I wrote above; Sylvia Papadopoulou, who ran the first, in a way, anarchist bookstore in Greece, 'International Library,' after Christos Konstantinidis's departure during the 1980s; Pavlos Nathanail, the second total objector in Greece's history, to whom, along with Maziotis, I have dedicated my book 'To Treloharto' and at whose political funeral I delivered a eulogy honoring his struggles; and Stavroula Lagadinou, whom we used to meet often at Sofia's first shop.

An illness and a death lead me to rekindle my relationship with an old comrade, and she paves the way for my latest translation to be published

Of course, they were not the only ones who died, but also others from the wider, antagonistic to power, movement, whom I also knew, such as Rika Rodaki, who recently owned a shop with ecological products on Tsamadou Street, in Exarchia. I mentioned only those whose funerals I went to. I didn't go to Rika's funeral, with whom I had never collaborated before, but I did go to a music event, which was held in the Tsamadou street park to raise money for her medical expenses when she was in the hospital with cancer, before she died. There I spoke for the first time after 30 years with Rodanthi, who had come with her sister, about Rika. I had spoken to her before 30 years ago, when she was active in the movement that was created to support the Petropoulos- Temberekides, when they had escaped from the disciplinary prisons of Corfu. She had since then been associated with Bouketsidis, they had also had a child together, and I had seen her at his funeral as well as at other funerals than the ones I mentioned. She didn't talk to me, I didn't talk to her, even though we knew each other. I have spoken before about how cold human relations are in our milieu. But at the Rika event, we happened to be sitting almost next to each other, so we couldn't help but talk. And not only did we talk, but a friendship developed between us, which had tangible consequences, as we shall see below.

First of all, when I showed her a new translation I had finished, the "Little Encyclopaedia of Anarchy," she was so interested in it that she proposed it for publication by the squat Prapopoulou of Chalandri. Some of the people from this squat came down, and we met at the social cooperative shop where Sofia participates, where we had a general discussion. Once they were convinced that it was worth the effort to publish it, regardless of the fact that they had never put out a book before, they invited me to their assembly to iron out the details. They selected letters, made some corrections, prepared a foreword, front cover and back cover with a biography of the author translated from French by Rodanthi and, in order to raise money to finance the publication, organized a musical event with a Rebetiko company, which consisted of three instrumentalists and a singer. I didn't like the idea of having an event with rebetika, but they insisted that only with rebetika people

gather and we can make money.



The poster put out by the squat Prapopoulou for the event to fund the publishing of the book

The event at the squat Prapopoulou for the publication of the "Small encyclopedia of anarchy": I am finally being honored in the place where I grew up!

The event was set for June 5. I went there with my former classmate Kostas Darmos from Chalandri, with whom I had previously gone to this squat for the presentation of a brochure entitled "Men's defenses in women's issues". That time the presentation was late and Darmos had left before it started. This time, when I found my comrade Theodoros Pisimisis and was talking with him, as the event was taking a while to start, he left to go see a friend of his. While waiting for him to get back, a girl introduced the reason for the gathering, noting that I was present as the translator, and then the event kicked off. And it wasn't just the musicians who played

for free for at least three hours to finance the book, there were also some girls who had prepared a bunch of plates of salads and appetizers that were offered for free. Only the beers were sold, so that from them and from the money that would be collected as an aid to the publication in a special box, the money for the publication would come out. Not many people had come but all the existing chairs and benches were filled. In the meantime, Kostas also returned. Then we went with Rodanthi's car and picked up Sophia who came by metro. I, of course, was very happy, because for the first time the anti-authoritarian milieu of Chalandri, the suburb of Athens, where I grew up from the age of three months and left at the age of twenty-one, did something for me. I had to turn 60 to see them honoring me in my hometown. Be that as it may, I ultimately proved to be the exception to the rule 'no prophet is honored in his homeland,' as I told Kostas on that day. When after the end of the event, Rodanthi's sister took us by car to the metro station, through the streets of Chalandri, I felt like I was returning to my homeland victorious, after a long campaign away from it.

So far so good, but the book was finally not published, even though they collected 93 euros. Of course, with 93 euros, what book would they publish? But they said that they had found a shop that would sell them the book for 2 euros a copy, and that's why they would initially publish as many books as they could with the money they collected, and by selling it, with the money they would make, they would publish more. And while the book was ready, with the front and back covers stating it was a Prapopoulou squat publication, and featuring two introductions—since the squat's library group had added their own introduction too—and with June 2016 printed as the publication date, for reasons I never found out, the release “got stuck”.When, after several months, Rodanthi asked them what had happened, they justified themselves by saying that they had found mistakes and were correcting them. When I saw that the "correction" was going to take a long time, I sent an email to Rodanthi, telling her that they would not release it, because their own anarchy was different from the anarchy the book was talking about. I shared the message to the person who had taken over the publication's coordination—some 22-year-old guy—and he 'flipped his lid,' sending me an abusive text after midnight and even calling me to curse me out over the phone as well. I felt it was beneath my dignity to pick up the phone at 2:00 AM just to take a torrent of abuse, or to reply to such an insulting message, which reminded me of similar messages we have received as the Anti-Nationalist Movement from fascists; however, Sofia replied to him with a very powerful text that put him in his place for having the nerve to speak to me that way. Fortunately, during moments like these, Sofia gets outraged and stands up for me; otherwise, I would have started getting used to the aggressive, tough-guy attitude of Greeks, believing they are incapable of expressing themselves any other way.

Later he sent us some messages asking if I wanted the book published to go to their meeting and discuss it. I didn't tolerate any more mockery, I asked Rodanthi to tell them to do with the money what they want and that's the end of the story. I had by then experienced a disappointment from the Prapopoulou squat, similar to the one I had experienced from the squat at Acharnon and Heyden, known as 'Villa Amalia,' before they evicted it and the municipality turned it into a school.

The struggle to get an old comrade we recently met released from the psychiatric hospital

Before several months had passed—after which I realized that the Prapopoulou squat would not publish my book—I began to live another one of those unforgettable experiences that you remember all your life. It started with a phone call, about a month before the event at the Prapopoulos occupation. The phone call was from an old comrade, whom I had met recently, specifically in the days when the police arrested the Golden Dawn leadership. I had met him at an anti-fascist demonstration. Since I met him, he had been hospitalized, for a short time, in a public psychiatric hospital, where we had visited him together with my friend Manolo. In the phone call this comrade wanted to ask me something related to the history of the anarchist milieu, which I don't remember now. But I remember that then I learned that he was again hospitalized in a psychiatric hospital, a private one this time, and he had already been confined there for about two and a half months. And the worst: He was locked up against his will, following a prosecutor's order. This saddened me, because this partner was very nice to me and I knew from the wretchedness of mental hospitals, having been "hospitalized" in one of them, when I was struggling to secure papers to get Psychiatric discharge. That's why, from his first phone call, I promised him that I would visit him. And indeed, I not only visited him but at his own urging promised him that I would do all I could to get him out of there, if I could do anything. He himself gave me some telephone numbers of people who supported him, such as a lawyer of our movement and a comrade, who was the heart of a self-managed social center, in which he frequented and was known. I called the lawyer, while his comrade called me herself. She actually told me that she knew me from an older event at this social center. Back then, a comrade had come to share his story after being tasered by the cops, arrested, and put through hours of agony at the central police headquarters (G.A.D.A.) alongside his fellow detainees, all of this following an anti-fascist motorbike protest in Agios Panteleimonas.

With this comrade, with the lawyer, Sophia, and with those others who were interested or I convinced them to be interested, such as Rodanthi and her sister Mitsuko, we continued the struggle, which the lawyer, the comrade from the self-managed center and others from the same center had already started, for his release. It was a difficult yet

beautiful struggle, because the comrade—like all those subjected to long-term confinement in a psychiatric hospital—was living through a miserable state of affairs. And, as we will see below, this struggle was not in vain.

In this struggle, the great push was given by Sophia, who searched the internet and found a lawyer, Alexakis, who was an expert in defending the rights of psychiatric inmates and had also given lectures on this subject. He made an appointment for him and the two of us went, together with the "soul" of the social center. He received us very well, and promised us that he would do all he could, as long as we secured some money for the legal expenses and for a small fee for him, since, after all, he would be taxed on the fees he would make as a lawyer in order to be able to proceed with the judicial process. For this money, the companion from the social center would undertake to organize an event related to psychiatric hospitals, from which she would see about raising money, just as she would look to collect from others who might be sensitized to the comrade's confinement. Unfortunately, the inmate himself was not able to pay the lawyer, since his relatives had access to whatever money he had and they did not want to cooperate with us. That way they wouldn't pay for court costs. After all, the fact that he was in a private clinic was a choice of his relatives. If he was in a public hospital, he would most likely have been discharged. But the private clinic was paid as long as it kept him inside. And judging by the way his attending physician treated our companion, it seemed that he was trying to keep him as long as he could.

We first realized that something was wrong when we tried to get the clinic's secretary to give him the documents related to him, because, as he told us, they weren't giving them to him, even though he had applied. All we managed to do was the secretary to inform his relatives that we were interested. Even the lawyer we took to the clinic to get authorization from our comrade couldn't manage to look at his files; instead, his attending doctor just yelled at him. They even refused to show his ID to our lawyer, claiming they don't have it. Not having access to the comrade's details made the lawyer's job even more difficult. Nevertheless, he did not give up and managed to collect evidence from the courts for his partner's case. Similarly, the outside doctor we brought to see our comrade—my brother, who happens to be a psychiatrist—couldn't manage to look at his medical records either, so he could form a complete picture of his situation. Everything that June indicated that we were going to have a very hard time tearing our comrade away from the psychiatrists' clutches.

If the partner was in prison, it would be better and we wouldn't be so bothered by the delay, because in prison they wouldn't do to the partner what they did to him in the mental hospital. First of all, he was given heavy psychotropic drugs that caused so- called "extrapyramidal" symptoms, such as constant tremors in his hands. And they didn't limit themselves to pills: They even injected him. And to say that they gave him modern drugs... They gave him drugs like the ones they gave my grandfather fifty years ago. Let

alone the living conditions... The inmates weren't even allowed to go out into the courtyard, and anyone who protested forcefully was tied down to the beds on the ground floor. So many times when I went to visit our comrade, I couldn't help but hear the screams of those desperate people who were strapped to their beds, without even being given enough sedatives to stop them from shouting... Probably doctors and nurses did not care about these heartbreaking voices that were heard throughout the mental hospital, because they were a terror to all unruly inmates. And they're supposed to sedate people in mental hospitals... Only those heartbreaking screams of the captives were enough to strain your nerves. It was only natural, after all this, that the comrade's appearance was the discouraging sight of a person who is 'just dragging himself along.' All the patients who had suffered long-term confinement presented the exact same image. Even their facial features were altered by years of psychiatric drug use. Looking at them made your heart bleed... Finally, the facility buildings were ancient and poorly maintained, with the result that inside this psychiatric hospital, you felt as though time had stopped in the 1950s!

The sruggle to free the comrade reaches the courts

The lawyer, studying the documents he managed to find in the courts, found a number of violations of the law and filed an appeal against the court's decision, which had upheld the prosecutor's order for forced hospitalization of the comrade. Pending the appeal, he applied to have the involuntary hospitalization suspended. This application was heard by a court, before which the comrade was brought from the psychiatric hospital. The lawyer had also obtained medical opinions from two private psychiatrists, who argued that the extension of confinement would only harm the partner, and he had a third psychiatrist with him. It is understood that the opinion of the comerade's treating doctor at the psychiatric hospital was negative for the comerade. The court questioned my brother's opinion with the excuse that he had not seen the history of the partner, without establishing from the behavior of the mental hospital towards my brother, that the mental hospital did everything it could to keep the partner by force. In short, it legitimized the illegality against my brother. Finally, the court ordered that our comrade be re-examined by state hospital psychiatrists, who would judge whether his confinement could be terminated.

We may not have managed to get the comerade out at that stage, but in the forecourt of the court he saw people from the self-managed social center, who supported him, and spoke with him. So he found out that he is not alone and that there are enough people who are interested in him. As he characteristically told me later, he felt the way he thought I felt when I was in prison and some people outside supported me. Finally, to raise money for the court proceedings, a special event had been held at the self-managed social centre. Unfortunately, this money, around 500 euros, was not enough, but the lawyer assured us that he would not abandon the

case for this, even if he had to pay out of his own pocket.

For the new medical evaluations, our comrade had to be transferred to Evangelismos Hospital. However, the asylum where he was being kept wouldn't send him, Evangelismos wouldn't request him, and neither hospital felt pressured by any court document to take action on the matter. Thus, time kept dragging on, until Sofia launched a series of phone calls to both the courts and the hospitals, which finally resulted in our comrade being transferred to Evangelismos.There we did not manage to get any of our psychiatrists to visit him, so that he could talk to the doctors, with the result that the opinions they gave were negative for the comerade. The only thing he gained was a temporary change of scenery by staying for about nine days on the ninth floor of an Evangelismos building, looking out over the whole of Athens from up there. But even there, they were pumping him full of meds.

After many more days, towards the end of July, the comerade was again taken to another court, this time, to decide based on the new opinions. This time, apart from our own psychiatrist, he also had a relative with him, a niece, whom Sophia had managed to persuade to help him get out. His niece stated that she would take care of him if he went out. The court, from what I'm told, seemed more positive towards the comerade than the last one, but after the day the partner's application was heard, time went by without publishing a decision, as dictated by the deadline it had. This is how the partner continued to be tortured throughout August and most of September until his appeals court was held. In short, all our efforts and expenses to end our comrade's confinement before his appeal court hearing were in vain, though we provided crucial support, ensuring he felt neither alone nor forgotten in a private psychiatric hospital.

At his appeal court which took place towards the end of September, and for it to happen we had to wait eight hours due to the bad organization of the courts, regardless of whether it lasted five minutes at most, I testified as a witness, following the lawyer's proposal. I answered a couple of standard questions from the lawyer, without, as he told me afterwards, answering exactly as he would have liked. But my participation was, in fact, formal, because the whole case would be judged by the documents we had produced, which showed that there had been many violations in the way the decision to involuntary hospitalization was made. But I never learned of this decision either, because it was also delayed until the comerade came out with another procedure.

The unexpectedly free comrade is featured in an event on psychiatric repression at the Pasamontaña social center

This procedure was for a judge to decide on the extension of confinement beyond a six-month period, and to do so new opinions were needed. One by his treating doctor and two others by two psychiatrists from the public psychiatric hospital of Dafni, who were designated as experts. They, instead of drawing up separate opinions, signed a joint one with the partner's treating doctor, which "burned" him. Nevertheless, and while I had now despaired to the point of not accompanying the lawyer to the courts, where the judge would decide on an extension or not, the decision was positive for the partner and, after eight months of forced confinement, on November he was finally discharged from the private psychiatric hospital. This was a great victory for the lawyer and a vindication for the support movement that had fought so long for the comrade. And as such it was celebrated in a special event held at the self-managed social center, in which the comerade also participated. A lot of people gathered there, about fifty people, and even psychiatrist Theodoros Megaloikonomou came, who had supported me so much when I was in prison as he did later, when I was trying to get exempted from military service. From what I had learned from the lawyer, Megalooikonomou had been following our struggle—which Sofia had kept him updated on anyway—and he had certainly spoken highly of us to him. Perhaps this was also the reason why the lawyer had chosen me as a witness for the court of appeal, something that didn't sit well with the female comrade who was the 'soul' of the self-managed social center; she felt that she should have been the witness, since she knew the institutionalized comrade much longer than I did.

One day, I went to visit the comrade we had gotten out of the psychiatric hospital at his home. I had started hearing rumors that he wasn't taking his medication and wasn't doing well. However, when I got there, I found him in good shape, perhaps because he had started taking his meds again. Another day Sophia went and saw him, along with Rodanthi and her sister, who had supported him like sisters while he was inside. From what Sophia told me, she had taken them to a very nice cafe with a very nice view. He seemed to be fine. And yet... Not many months passed and before the end of the winter, the comrade was locked up again with a prosecutor's order. From what I gathered, he had reached a point where even his niece—who had taken him in and was a very kind person, as I had noticed the time I visited the comrade's home—could no longer care for him... Since that time I have not contacted him again. At least, I found out later that it came out again. This time he had not been locked up in a private clinic.

At last, there's an audience out there that actually wants to hear what I have to say. I've been asked to be a speaker at book launches in Agrinio and Ioannina

The new year brought me a sense of vindication. A validation of the choices I made concerning my political beliefs and my activism. In particular, before the end of January, I was invited to present my translation "Memories of female terrorists" in Agrinio and Ioannina, with expenses paid, since I was financially so poor that I could not go with my own expenses. So I found myself again in Agrinio, which I had years to go to, and I also got to know Lake Trichonida, one of the largest in Greece, where the friend who hosted me took me in his car.

The joint poster that was issued for the book presentations and put up in Agrinio and Giannena

The presentation took place at the squat Apertus, which I had visited several times before. There were not many people but the comrades had done everything they could, since they had put up the relevant poster in various parts of the city. Before the presentation began, a companion had brought a bottle of fine red wine that he had made himself. It was so nice that I drank a lot of it, before and after the presentation of the translation. So I spent a pleasant evening since the event was also a success, from the point of view that the expenses I had incurred to go to Agrinio and from there to Ioannina were paid and the presentation was followed by an extended discussion.

A book launch in Ioannina organized by the most well-known representative of the total conscientious objectors' organization “The Barefoot Battalion”

The other day I went to Ioannina. I had been there so many times that I now felt a familiarity with this beautiful city. I knew, at least, where the new intercity bus station was, the squat Antibiosi, which is on the same street, how to get from the intercity station to the central square, how to get to the castle, etc. After all, from the time I had visited Ioannina with my father and family and later during the six-day school trip of the last year of the sixth form high school, I had been there several times, so I had already visited their most important sights. But no matter how many times I went, Ioannina exerted an attraction because it is an old city with a great history and culture. Athens was nothing in front of it until it became the capital of the Greek state that was created in 1830. But I will never forget the time when my four-year-old son had fallen and cracked his skull, with the result that the whole family ended up in university hospital of Ioannina with him. Luckily, he managed to pull through that time.

From the long-distance bus station, Michalis Tolis, the best-known representative of the most important anti-militarist organization in Greece, “The Barefoot Battalion” came and picked me up. I saw this fellow's name figured in slogans in large letters on city walls. To me this was a great honor, because it showed that I was esteemed by those whose esteem I desired.

The presentation of the translation took place in a squat, where there is a bookstore and an event hall with a bar, as well as the offices of four collectives. It had over forty people and then a discussion followed, just like in Agrinio. In this discussion, as in the presentation, I was on my own, in the sense that I was answering questions that were put to me on my own. Because the subject was related to the so-called terrorism, since the book was called "Memories of female terrorists", some things were also said in relation to the anti-authoritarians that the Greek state has in prison as terrorists. My position was that the repression they experience is disproportionate to the gravity of their actions, given that they haven't killed anyone. Also, in my presentation I mentioned

that today in Greece two women from the organization "Revolutionary Struggle" and two from the organization "Conspiracy of the Cores of Fire" are called terrorists and are in prison. I mentioned these by name, without referring to their organizations. I also said that the proceeds from the sales of the book are intended to support these and other imprisoned and persecuted activists. Later on, when the comrade from Agrinio who had hosted me uploaded my presentation to the internet, someone commented below that the 'Solidarity Fund for Imprisoned and Persecuted Fighters'—which had published the book—has no connection to the “Conspiracy of Cells of Fire”. Near the end of the debate, an elderly guy around my age spoke up. In contrast to me, as I was totally trashing Sergei Nechayev in my presentation, he fiercely stood up for him. After the conversation I learned that in the past, when he was studying in Thrace, he had published the only anti-authoritarian magazine of Thrace that had fallen into my hands: "Spartacus". Few issues were published by this magazine during the 80s, but they were valuable, not only because the editorial presence of the anti-authoritarians in Thrace did not continue at that time, but also because the magazine took a stand in favor of the Turkish minority, an issue that had always been taboo for the anti-authoritarian press, like all the issues concerning national minorities.

Another acquaintance I made that night, was my acquaintance with the manager of Isnafi publishing houses, which until now have produced quite a few good books. He told me that I had hosted him for a few hours at my house in Lefkada, many years ago, and that I had lent him 1000 drachmas that I would get back from Maragakis. I remembered the 1000 drachmas, but I didn't remember the hospitality or the man, who I had only seen once so many years ago.

In the castle of Ioannina 41 years after visiting it during the six-day school trip of the six-year high school I graduated in 1974

The other day before I left I visited the town's castle, which has a whole town inside it, not like the castle of Lefkada, which had the town inside it leveled by the Venetian conqueror Francesco Morosini when captured it in 1684, or the castle of Athens (Acropolis) that the city inside was razed by archaeologists. At two ends of the castle of Ioannina on a hill, overlooking the lake, there are two mosques which I visited, one of the 17th century, which I had visited before, and the other of the 18th century, which I visited for the first time and in front of it is a tomb with an elaborate railing, in which there is the headless corpse of the most famous governor of Epirus during the Ottoman Empire, Ali Pasha, and his wife. His head, after he was killed by the Sultan's troops in 1821, ended up in Istanbul, to convince the Sultan that he had died and to be turned into chalice, as was then the tradition for the sultan's famous enemies. As for the elaborate railing, I learned that it was stolen in 1999 and that what is now in the tomb is an exact replica. And something else I visited in the castle was an exhibition about the Epirotean immigrants to America at the beginning of the last century. This exhibition interested me, because at that time two of my

father's cousins had immigrated to America, of whom I have spoken before, and as I said of them, much later, when they were old, I met one, who was coming regularly to Greece, and two of her children. From one of them, a woman who at the age of 86 had come back to Greece some years ago, I learned that one of my Greek-American relatives, a son or grandson of these immigrants, lives in Honolulu, the capital of Hawaii!

Before I left Ioannina, I saw Michalis on a motorcycle, with some clothes stained with paint. It was Sunday but he was working. I had taken a bottle of tsipouro and some chips and was walking the streets, going home, to say goodbye to him. He told me that he was interested in selling my book "The mental discharge" and I was very happy. Indeed after some months he came to Athens and took a number of copies, and when they ran out I sent him more and took more to him when that June I went to Lefkada. I did not ask for money for this book and I am offering it to support the struggle of the "Barefoot Batallion". Is there a greater honor for me than to have my only book sold for their support by the most important organization of all conscription refusers in Greece, the "Barefoot Batallion"? The most important anti- militarist organization? Even after 30 years since I wrote it, and after Nathanail, to whom I dedicated it, has died, as I also dedicated it to Maziotis and to all conscription refusers, my book, finally, finds the place it deserves.

After a full 30 years, my translation of the book "The struggle to be human" is published

Another book I translated 30 years ago, 'The Struggle to Be Human', has finally found a publisher, thanks to a recommendation by Sofia to a friend of Castro's, who also offered to republish her own book, 'Korydallos Women's Prisons'. For this book, I had not only spent time translating it, but had also paid 150,000 drachmas for its typing, to the publisher George Garbis. From the publisher, Castro's friend, Nikos Papachristopoulos of "Opportuna" publications, who printed it in 150 copies, I took 25 copies, which I distributed to comrades and friends except for 3 that I left to be sold in the cafe-bookstore "Idionimo " of Korydallos, which I will talk about below. At least he gave me 25 copies, while the Solidarity Fund gave me one or two, if anything, because I don't remember well. I, of course, the two books that I had translated 20 and 30 years ago, I had translated them for the anarchist movement and not to make money, and when I saw that the Greek anarchists were indifferent to them, I did not print them, even though in 2009 I had found money to print them. Only one comrade had been interested in "The Struggle to Be Human" but even he had not been able to find the money to publish it. From a point of view it is better that things turned out this way, because for a new book the difficulty is not so much the printing as the distribution. Personally, I wouldn't have been able to distribute

them if I had printed them the way the Fund and 'Opportuna' publications do. However, I cannot deny that beyond my contribution to the movement when I was translating them, I hoped they would be published and serve as a sample of my work, helping me secure future translation jobs.They weren't published for so many years, so I didn't get jobs as a translator, apart from the two books that Garbis of the "Free Press" had given me, and he never published any. The job didn't want me it seems! The only thing I didn't like about the publication of the book "The Struggle to Be Human" was that in the introduction that the publisher asked me to write, Sophia's five-day hunger strike was made five days by the "printer's demon" and I instead of writing "manner", I wrote that the "place" Spyros Kotretsos died was unknown. However, Nikos assured me that, in addition to the 150, he printed another 100 copies with these two errors corrected. He also undertook to publish two other translations of mine, one from the Italian, "The Little Encyclopedia of Anarchy", and one from the French, "In the Hell of Gang Rapes". For the second one he told me that he already paid 1000 euros for the rights and I expect it to be printed in the near future. I am also thinking of offering him another translation that I have ready, the translation of the book "Slavery Inc.: the untold story of international sex trafficking" (“Esclavas del Poder” in its Spanish edition), by Lydia Katso, which is about the untold history of international human trafficking.

Back in Korydallos for a book launch, 36 years after my release from it's prison

After Agrinio and Ioannina, the time has come for me to present my translation "Memories of female terrorists" in Athens, at the cafe-bookstore "Idionimo" in Korydallos. The presentation took place on March 25, 2017. The date was chosen by me, as I had chosen October 28, 2011 for the presentation of the Macedonian-Greek dictionary. I don't know why, but this presentation, apart from being the first one I gave in Athens, was the only one that took place in Korydallos, where the largest prisons in the country are located, where imprisoned activists are also held. Until then, other presentations of this book had been made by the Solidarity Fund at the squat Vancouver in the center of Athens, at the squat Kouvelos in Marousi and at the Picrodafni hangout in Brahami. The Fund also made a presentation in Thessaloniki.

The poster we produced in a limited number of copies for the book launch in Korydallos

I felt deeply moved to be doing the presentation in the very suburb where I had served about two years in prison between 1979 and 1981, because I proved that I neither 'learned my lesson' in all those years since, nor did I forget the prisons. After all, on the day of the presentation, I went to the owner of the bookstore and the book "The Struggle to be Human", whose subtitle is "Crime, Criminology and Anarchism" and has a direct connection with prisons. And although there were no more than fifteen people at the presentation, among them there were also old comrades, one of whom, or rather the only one, was the lawyer Eleni Dimoulea, who used to come and see me in prison, even in the prisons of Aegina, and she never took any money from me. She even accompanied me all the way to the stop for trolley 21, which I took to return to Athens from Korydallos.

The end